

ANGLO-SAXONS IN A FRANKISH WORLD,  
690–900

STUDIES IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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ANGLO-SAXONS IN A FRANKISH WORLD,  
690–900

by

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## ABBREVIATIONS

For full references to texts, see the bibliography.

AASS	Acta sanctorum (Brussels, 1643–1940)
Alcuin, <i>VW</i>	Alcuin, <i>Vita Willibrordi</i>
Altfrid, <i>VLger</i>	Altfrid, <i>Vita Liudgeri</i>
<i>AmKg</i>	<i>Archiv für mittelhheinische Kirchengeschichte</i>
<i>ARF</i>	<i>Annales regni Francorum</i>
<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
Bede, <i>HE</i>	Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum</i>
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CSMLT	Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought
<i>Die Briefe</i>	<i>Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus</i> , ed. by Tangl
Echternach	<i>Geschichte der Grundherrschaft Echternach im Frühmittelalter</i> , vol. I: <i>Quellenband</i> , ed. by Wampach
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
Eigil, <i>VS</i>	Eigil, <i>Vita Sturmi</i>
<i>EME</i>	<i>Early Medieval Europe</i>
Ermenrich, <i>SS</i>	Ermenrich, <i>Sermo Sualonis</i>
Hygeburg, <i>VWill</i>	Hygeburg, <i>Vita Willibaldi</i>

Hygeburg, <i>VWyn</i>	Hygeburg, <i>Vita Wynnebaldi</i>
Liudger, <i>VG</i>	Liudger, <i>Vita Gregorii</i>
Lupus, <i>VWig</i>	Lupus of Ferrières, <i>Vita Wigberti</i>
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	Auctores antiquissimi
Cap.	Capitularia regum Francorum
Conc.	Concilia
DD Kar.	Diplomatum Karolinorum
DD Mer.	Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica
Epp.	Epistolae
SRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi
SRL	Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum
SRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
SS	Scriptores in folio
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , series ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–65)
Rimbert, <i>VA</i>	Rimbert, <i>Vita Anskarii</i>
Rudolf, <i>VL</i>	Rudolf of Fulda, <i>Vita Leobae</i>
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SEM	Studies in the Early Middle Ages, series ed. by Elizabeth Tyler, Julian Richards, and Ross Balzaretti (Turnhout, 2000–)
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
TRW	The Transformation of the Roman World, series ed. by Ian Wood (Leiden, 1997–)
<i>UBF</i>	<i>Urkundenbuch der Kloster Fulda</i> , ed. by Stengel
<i>VaB</i>	anon., <i>Vita altera Bonifatii</i>
<i>VBurch</i>	anon., <i>Vita antiquior Burchardi</i>
<i>VWhad</i>	anon., <i>Vita Willehadi</i>
Willibald, <i>VB</i>	Willibald, <i>Vita Bonifatii</i>

# MAPS

The maps have been drawn by the author.



Map 1. Early Medieval Europe.



Map 2. The Anglo-Saxon Missions 690–900.

## INTRODUCTION

On the morning of 5 June 754, a band of Anglo-Saxon missionaries working in Dokkum in northern Frisia was attacked and murdered by pagan pirates.<sup>1</sup> News of the terrible event spread quickly to the Christian lands to the south. The bodies of the murdered missionaries were retrieved and returned to the mission-station at Utrecht. With great speed a delegation of their compatriots arrived from the regions of Hesse and Thuringia in Germania, where the lead missionary had spent much of his long career, in order to collect their leader's body; his remains were taken first to his archiepiscopal church in Mainz and later to his own monastic foundation in Fulda. A mere ten days after the murder, rich noblemen were already bestowing the cult sites of the martyrs with rich gifts.<sup>2</sup> A priest in the monastery of St Martin's, Utrecht, later wrote:

In quattuor ergo felicissimus locis, id est Dokinga, Traiecto, in Moguntia urbe, in Fuldensi cenobio, beati martiris presentia visilibus crebro sentitur indiciiis, in quibus per intercessionem eius plurime sanitates a Domino aliaque prestantur beneficia usque in hodiernum diem.<sup>3</sup>

The passage neatly illustrates two related religious interests of the early Middle Ages: the signs that proved the power of the saints on earth and the association between saints and places which helped to relate that power to earthly communities. The missionaries were not victims in the opinion of the St Martin's priest, but

<sup>1</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8; Eigil, *VS*, c. 15; *VaB*, cc. 14–16.

<sup>2</sup> *UBF*, no. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *VaB*, c. 17: 'And so in four most blessed places, that is Dokkum, Utrecht, in the city of Mainz, and the monastery of Fulda, the presence of the blessed martyrs was felt in numerous signs and revelations, in which his many health-bringing intercessions from the Lord and other benefits became known everywhere to this day.'

rather martyrs whose sanctity connected communities in Frisia and Germany with heaven and whose power healed those who venerated them.

The leader of the martyrs in 754 was St Boniface, an Anglo-Saxon priest from Devon who had spent nearly forty years working as a reformer and missionary amongst the Franks and their neighbours. He was just one of a substantial number of pious individuals from early medieval Britain who sought new spiritual rewards abroad and, in the process, had a profound impact on the cultures they encountered.<sup>4</sup> This book explores the role of these figures both in their contribution to change in the Frankish world and in the ways their work was retrospectively appropriated and reinterpreted. In particular, it focuses on the different strategies used in eighth- and ninth-century hagiography to establish associated figures as useful and meaningful parts of the recent past. The reputation of the Anglo-Saxons on the continent — much of which has grown in the telling — sees them as figures responsible for spreading Christianity in Germany, founding new communities, popularizing Benedictine monasticism and papal authority, and generally helping to end the ‘Dark Ages’ with the foundation of a new European culture. In few of these so-called activities do we now see them as always path-breaking or innovative, thanks to the last fifty years of important contextual scholarship.<sup>5</sup> And yet, as the example of St Boniface shows, people on the continent were keen to embrace and praise the perceived legacy of the Anglo-Saxons from the very beginning. It is time for a reassessment of the ‘missions’ which explores the relationship between the initial pious works and the development of legends in the early medieval cults of saints.

The ‘missions’ (as they are best known) were a wide-ranging cluster of enterprises which brought together a number of people from across Britain. They began

<sup>4</sup> On the spiritual and political connections between Anglo-Saxon England and the continent in this period, see Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term 1943* (Oxford, 1946), and Joanna Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c. 750–870* (Aldershot, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> For review essays at different stages of the modern historiography, see Heinz Löwe, ‘Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius: Ihre Bedeutung für die Missionsgeschichte ihrer Zeit’, in *La conversione al cristianesimo dell’alto medioevo*, Settimane, 14 (Spoleto, 1967), pp. 217–61; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘A Background to St. Boniface’s Mission’, in *England Before the Conquest: Studies Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 35–48; Timothy Reuter, ‘Saint Boniface and Europe’, in *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on Saint Boniface and the Church at Crediton*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Exeter, 1980), pp. 69–94; James T. Palmer, ‘Saxon or European? Interpreting and Reinterpreting St Boniface’, *History Compass*, 4 (2006), 852–69.



in earnest with St Willibrord (d. 739), ‘the Apostle of the Frisians’.<sup>6</sup> Originally from Northumbria, Willibrord travelled with a number of companions from a base in Ireland in 690 in order to fulfil the frustrated missionary plans of his friend Ecgberht (d. 716). Ecgberht, so his friend Bede recounted in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* of 731, had wished to convert the pagan peoples of *Germania* with whom the Anglo-Saxons felt an affinity; failing that, he vowed to travel on pilgrimage to Rome.<sup>7</sup> (In the end bad weather prevented him from doing either.) Other prominent figures from the North of England followed Willibrord’s example only later in the eighth century with Willehad (arrived c. 770, d. 789), who became the first Bishop of Bremen in Saxony in 787. In 786/87 Alcuin (d. 804), a relative of both Willibrord and Willehad, was enticed from the school at York to head the palace school at Aachen, and so came into the service of Charlemagne (d. 814), the great Carolingian king and, from 800, emperor.<sup>8</sup> As a scholar and man of court, however, Alcuin’s career took a different trajectory from those of his countrymen, and he is of most interest in this present study as a hagiographer and link between England and the continent.

Britain south of the Humber also had its influence on the course of the missions. From Devon in 716 a middle-aged priest called Wynfrith — the future ‘Boniface’ — set out to Frisia to help Willibrord.<sup>9</sup> Boniface’s wide-ranging work, followed by his martyrdom in 754, ensured his status as one of the great figures of his day. Many of his relatives followed him overseas and some were venerated as saints for their travails, including Leoba (d. 782) in Hesse and the siblings Willibald (d. 787),

<sup>6</sup> Camillus Wampach, *Willibrord: Sein Leben und Lebenswerk* (Luxembourg, 1953); Anton G. Weiler, *Willibrords Missie: Christendom en Cultuur in de Zevende en Achste Eeuw* (Hilversum, 1989); *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande, Gründer der Abtei Echternach: Gedenkgabe zum 1250. Todestag des angelsächsischen Missionars*, ed. by Georges Kiesel and Jean Schroeder (Luxembourg, 1989); *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, ed. by Petty Bange and Anton G. Weiler, *Middeleeuwse Studies*, 6 (Nijmegen, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Donald A. Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation* (Leiden, 2004), especially pp. 336–46 on redating Alcuin’s first journey to court; *Alcuin: Scholar at the Carolingian Court*, ed. by Luke A. J. R. Houwen and Alasdair A. MacDonald, *Germania Latina*, 3 (Groningen, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag* (Fulda, 1954); *Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter; Marco Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord*, *Gedenkwaardige momenten en figuren uit de vaderlandse geschiedenis*, 7 (Hilversum, 1999); Lutz E. von Padberg, *Bonifatius: Missionar und Reformer* (Munich, 2004); *Bonifatius: Vom angelsächsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. by Michael Imhof and Gregor K. Stasch (Fulda, 2004).

Wynnebald (d. 761), and Waldburga (d. 779) in Bavaria.<sup>10</sup> Closely related to this group — probably through shared connections with Malmesbury — were a Mercian contingent who included Boniface's senior colleague Bishop Burchard of Würzburg (d. 752) and Boniface's precocious successor Archbishop Lull of Mainz (d. 786).<sup>11</sup> There was in no sense a coordinated enterprise, as Rosamond McKitterick has pointed out, but for more than a generation Anglo-Saxons from across Britain felt moved to engage in similar lines of work abroad.

A focus on Anglo-Saxons must not preclude the study of key Franks, Frisians, and Bavarians who were involved in the same projects. Abbot Gregory of Utrecht (d. c. 775) and Abbot Sturm of Fulda (d. c. 779) — a Frank and a Bavarian respectively — were favourite pupils of Boniface's and played central roles in extending his vision of the monastic and missionary life. The Carolingian *vitae* of both abbots, moreover, contain important accounts of the Anglo-Saxons' work and the way it was developed by later figures. The missionary and hagiographical legacy of the Anglo-Saxons was perhaps best embodied in the work of St Liudger of Münster (d. 809).<sup>12</sup> From a powerful Frisian family first converted by Willibrord, Liudger was taught by both Gregory of Utrecht and Alcuin of York before developing the cult of St Boniface at Dokkum, writing a double biography of Gregory and Boniface, and building monasteries to help Christianize Saxony. He is thus representative of the impact of the Anglo-Saxons and of efforts to conceptualize and extend their work in word and deed. Few early medieval churchmen may have pursued their interest in the Anglo-Saxons quite so energetically, but any such engagement with the recent past contributed to a (re)shaping of the reputation of the missions.

The work and reputation of the Anglo-Saxon missions to the continent helped to shape a lively period of the Middle Ages, and in turn the Middle Ages redefined the 'missions' as they progressed. Readers searching for a comprehensive overview

<sup>10</sup> *Der heilige Willibald – Klosterbischof oder Bistumsgründer?*, ed. by Harald Dickerhof, Ernst Reiter, and Stefan Weinfurter, Eichstätter Studien, 30 (Regensburg, 1990); Janet L. Nelson, 'Women and the Word in the Earlier Middle Ages', in *Women in the Church*, ed. by William J. Shiels and Diana Wood, Studies in Church History, 27 (Oxford, 1990), pp. 53–78.

<sup>11</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections and Local Influences*, Vaughn Paper, 36 (Leicester, 1991); James T. Palmer, 'The "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull: Between Bonifatian Mission and Carolingian Church Control', *EME*, 13 (2005), 249–76.

<sup>12</sup> Arnold Angenendt, *Liudger: Missionar – Abt – Bischof im frühen Mittelalter* (Münster, 2005); 805: *Liudger wird Bischof. Spuren eines Heiligen zwischen York, Rom und Münster*, ed. by Gabrielle Isenberg and Barbara Rommé (Mainz, 2005).



of the period will be best served elsewhere, but some key details can be cited to help frame the questions about how and why certain Anglo-Saxons gained their grand reputations.<sup>13</sup> First, the Anglo-Saxon 'missions' played a role in the ongoing re-orientation of Europe necessitated by the end of the western Roman Empire in the fifth century.<sup>14</sup> The papacy in Rome still considered itself to be part of the Roman Empire which had (more than) survived in Byzantium; at the same time, however, substantial differences with the East began to mount.<sup>15</sup> Popes also sought new allies against the Lombards of Northern Italy, which in practice meant securing the allegiance of the Franks north of the Alps, led from the early eighth century by the Pippinids (later called the Carolingians). The old horizons of the Roman World were challenged by the rise of Islam and the rapid expansion of Arab tribes who in a couple of generations came to control much of the Middle East, Northern Africa, and Spain.<sup>16</sup> Henri Pirenne famously argued that this shattered the coherence of the Mediterranean, paving the way for a Northern power like the Franks to emerge.<sup>17</sup> Few scholars still interpret events quite so emphatically, although clearly such changes did have profound consequences, as did the Franks' dealings with the

<sup>13</sup> For two majestic new and different views of the period, see Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages 400–800* (Oxford, 2005) and Julia M. H. Smith, *Europe After Rome: A New Cultural History 500–1000* (Oxford, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> The nature of change after the Fall of Rome has recently been re-examined in the volumes of the European Science Foundation-sponsored Transformation of the Roman World series (1997–). The title is not supposed to imply a peaceful evolution, but is rather a neutral modern banner for a project wide-ranging in chronological and geographical scope: see Ian Wood, 'The European Science Foundation's Programme on the Transformation of the Roman World and Emergence of Early Medieval Europe', *EME*, 6 (1997), 217–27. For a modern restatement of the real chaos and violence of the end of empire in the West, see Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilisation* (Oxford, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia, 1984); Paolo Delogu, 'The Papacy, Rome and the Wider World in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, ed. by Julia M. H. Smith (Leiden, 2000), pp. 197–220.

<sup>16</sup> Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Centuries* (Harlow, 1986); Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (Albany, 1994); Geoffrey Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate 661–750*, 2nd edn (London, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Henri Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Brussels, 1937); trans. by Bernard Miall, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (London, 1939). For a later evaluation of the thesis, see R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe* (London, 1983).

changing world around them.<sup>18</sup> When Anglo-Saxons travelled to Rome or, in the case of Willibald of Eichstätt, to the Holy Land, they encountered peoples, institutions, and traditions in the process of redefinition. The 'issue of how to reconcile a universal Christianity with the conditions of a highly regionalized world' was of paramount importance to the post-Roman West as 'Micro-Christendoms' developed.<sup>19</sup> To understand the work of the Anglo-Saxons and their contemporaries one must bear in mind the practical and imaginative conditions, both locally and on a wider scale, which framed change in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Second, the Anglo-Saxons are implicated in a number of key moments during the rise of the powerful Carolingian family.<sup>20</sup> When Willibrord first arrived in Frankia, the Pippinids were still only one of a number of powerful noble families in Austrasia, albeit one who controlled the office of *maior palatii*. Willibrord helped Pippin II (d. 716) to secure a hold on Frisia and then, following Pippin's death, seems to have led elements of the Frankish nobility towards supporting the illegitimate heir Charles Martel (d. 741).<sup>21</sup> In 751 the Carolingians finally became kings of the Franks under Charles's son Pippin III (d. 768) after a palace coup which annals from the Frankish court itself claimed had the active involvement of Boniface and Burchard.<sup>22</sup> A fourth generation of the Pippinids benefited from Anglo-Saxon support when Charlemagne worked with Lull in converting the

<sup>18</sup> See most recently Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*. On Carolingian external policies, see François L. Ganshof, 'The Frankish Monarchy and its External Relations, from Pippin III to Louis the Pious', in his *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy: Studies in Carolingian History*, trans. by Janet Sondheimer (London, 1971), pp. 162–204; Timothy Reuter, 'The End of Carolingian Military Expansion', in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–40)*, ed. by Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford, 1990), pp. 391–405.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200–1000*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2003), p. 16 (for quotation) and pp. 355–79.

<sup>20</sup> For overviews, see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians 751–987* (London, 1984); Rudolf Schieffer, *Die Karolinger*, Urban-Taschenbücher, 411, 3rd edn (Stuttgart, 2000). On the early emergence of Pippinid power, see Richard A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987).

<sup>21</sup> Charles Martel has been comprehensively re-evaluated in recent scholarship: *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jörg Jarnut, Ulrich Nonn, and Michael Richter, Beihefte der Francia, 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994); Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, 'The Illusion of Royal Power in the Carolingian Annals', *EHR*, 460 (2000), 1–20; Josef Semmler, *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751 und die fränkische Königssalbung*, *Studia Humaniora*, Series Minor, 6 (Düsseldorf, 2003); *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung*, ed. by Matthias Becher and Jörg Jarnut (Münster, 2004).

Saxons, and Alcuin offered his advice and learning on a number of issues including the benefits of receiving the imperial title in Rome on Christmas Day 800.<sup>23</sup> The Carolingians, and Charlemagne in particular, did so much to shape ideas of Europe for over a millennium that it is necessary to ask what the Anglo-Saxons' contributions were. But in order to gain a sense of the extent of any such influence, one must also ask how the Anglo-Saxons worked with other leading families, and to what extent internal figures like Chrodegang of Metz or Benedict of Aniane helped to drive forward change.<sup>24</sup>

A third context is the drawn-out end to Frankish expansionism and, eventually, their political unity following the zenith of Carolingian authority under Charlemagne.<sup>25</sup> After the death of Willehad in 789, missionary work was left firmly in the hands of indigenous trailblazers like St Liudger, the Frisian founder of Münster and Werden, or later St Anskar (d. 865), the first Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen and a keen promoter of mission to Scandinavia.<sup>26</sup> Such figures took their lead from Anglo-Saxon traditions and pushed them further geographically. But there was little interest in expanding the Frankish *imperium* north by force. The three-way division of the empire in 843 between Charlemagne's grandsons helped to focus political ambitions on internal order and competition between siblings (something which also affected the way the Anglo-Saxon saints were perceived because of the impact on episcopal organization).<sup>27</sup> Stability was not helped either by the raids of

<sup>23</sup> Scholarship on Charlemagne continues to grow almost exponentially. For recent surveys, see Roger Collins, *Charlemagne* (London, 1998) and *Charlemagne: Empire and Society*, ed. by Joanna Story (Manchester, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> On Chrodegang, see now M. A. Claussen, *The Reform of the Frankish Church: Chrodegang of Metz and the 'Regula canonorum' in the Eighth Century*, CSMLT, 4th Series, 61 (Cambridge, 2004). On Benedict, see Josef Semmler, 'Benedictus II: Una Regula – Una Consuetudo', in *Benedictine Culture 750–1050*, ed. by Willem Lourdaux and Daniel Verhelst, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia series, 1, studia, 11 (Leuven, 1983), pp. 1–49.

<sup>25</sup> Reuter, 'End of Carolingian Military Expansion'; Simon MacLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire*, CSMLT, 4th series, 57 (Cambridge, 2003); James T. Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Scandinavian Mission in the Ninth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 55 (2004), 235–56.

<sup>26</sup> On Liudger, see Angenendt, *Liudger; 805*, ed. by Isenberg and Rommé. On Anskar, see Ian Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', in *The Christianization of Scandinavia*, ed. by Peter H. Sawyer, Birgit Sawyer, and Ian Wood (Alingsås, 1987), pp. 36–67; Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*'.

<sup>27</sup> François L. Ganshof, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Bedeutung des Vertrags von Verdun (843)', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 12 (1956), 313–30; Janet L. Nelson, 'Public Histories and Private History in the Work of Nithard', *Speculum*, 60 (1985), 251–93.

the Vikings or, as the century wore on, the difficulties the Franks had in finding new and effective Carolingian kings.<sup>28</sup> The Anglo-Saxon legacies which mattered most now were often intellectual ones, as exemplified by the works of Hrabanus Maurus (Abbot of Fulda 822–42, Archbishop of Mainz 847–56).<sup>29</sup> It is necessary to ask in what ways the changing world of the ninth century reshaped the past.

To a lesser extent a fourth context, that of Anglo-Saxon England itself, needs consideration.<sup>30</sup> Because the Anglo-Saxons ‘back home’ were not much interested in their exports — there were, for example, no *vitae* written in Britain about the missions — there will only be limited analysis of the missions’ impact the other way. It is nevertheless an important background because one needs to understand what kind of education and political environment compelled Anglo-Saxons to work abroad. Northumbria was a dominant force when Willibrord left for Ireland in the 680s; but by the time the saint died, the English kingdoms were dominated by the ‘Mercian Supremacy’ of the long-lived kings Æthelbald (r. 716–57) and Offa the Great (r. 757–96), two rulers with a keen eye on how their continental counterparts did things.<sup>31</sup> Culturally, Northumbria was still in its ‘golden age’, first with the great historical, exegetical, and — most importantly — didactic works of Bede (d. 735), and then with the famous York School which produced Alcuin.<sup>32</sup> The South could lay claim to its own intellectual heritage too, first with the establishment of the Canterbury School under the Greek archbishop Theodore (d. 690), and then with the influential and eccentric work of Aldhelm at Malmesbury (d. 709).<sup>33</sup> It will be

<sup>28</sup> Simon MacLean, ‘The Carolingian Response to the Revolt of Boso, 879–887’, *EME*, 10 (2001), 21–48.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Lehmann, ‘Zu Hrabans geistiger Bedeutung’, in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 473–87; *Hrabanus Maurus: Lehrer, Abt und Bischof*, ed. by Raymond Kottje and Harald Zimmermann (Wiesbaden, 1982).

<sup>30</sup> *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by James Campbell (London, 1982); Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (London, 1991).

<sup>31</sup> Janet L. Nelson, ‘Carolingian Contacts’, in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, ed. by Michelle Brown and Carol Farr (Leicester, 2001), pp. 126–43; *Æthelbald and Offa: Two Eighth-Century Kings of Mercia*, ed. by David Hill and Margaret Worthington, BAR British Series, 383 (Oxford, 2005).

<sup>32</sup> *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteen-Hundredth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. by Gerald Bonner (London, 1976); Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, 2nd edn (London, 2002); Bullough, *Alcuin*, pp. 127–249; *The Golden Age of Northumbria*, ed. by Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Michael Lapidge, ‘The School of Theodore and Hadrian’, *ASE*, 15 (1986), 45–72; *Archbishop Theodore*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, CSASE, 11 (Cambridge, 1995); Patrick Sims-Williams,

necessary to make account of the ways in which the Anglo-Saxon background shaped the outlook of the 'missions' and continued to influence events even at a distance.

### *The Anglo-Saxon Missions in Modern Historiography*

Many modern assumptions about and interpretations of the Anglo-Saxon 'missions' derive from the ways in which the subject has been treated in the twentieth century. Before 1945 the Anglo-Saxons' work was seen largely along religious and national lines in German, Dutch, and English studies, almost always as the light in a 'Dark Age'.<sup>34</sup> Pirenne characterized Boniface's time with these words: 'the entire people must have been [. . .] illiterate [. . .]. The merchants of the cities were dispersed. The clergy itself had lapsed into a state of barbarism, ignorance and immorality'; it was thanks to Pirenne's heroic Belgian Carolingians, with the help of Willibrord and Boniface, that the situation was arrested.<sup>35</sup> In 1933 Erich Caspar had contrasted the Catholic Anglo-Saxons and their 'undiluted German spirit' ('unvermischter germanischer Geistigkeit') with the 'unorthodox' Spaniards and Irish in his history of the papacy.<sup>36</sup> That same year Stephen Crawford extolled the virtues of the Anglo-Saxons for invigorating culture and learning on the continent, neatly ignoring much that was already there.<sup>37</sup> Despite the book's inaccuracies, its general tenor and patriotism found favour with Sir Frank Stenton, who likewise wrote in 1943 of how the Anglo-Saxons had, without help, saved the souls of the 'heathen Germans'.<sup>38</sup> In all these differing works, the emphasis always returned to how specific individuals had shaped national history.

*Religion and Literature in Western England 600–800*, CSASE, 3 (Cambridge, 1990); Andrew Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, CSASE, 8 (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> Albert Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, 5 vols (Leipzig, 1898–1911), I, 576–78; Regnerius R. Post, *Kerkgeschiedenis van Nederland in de Middeleeuwen*, 2 vols (Utrecht, 1957), I, 14–29; Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn, Oxford History of England, 2 (Oxford, 1971), pp. 165–76.

<sup>35</sup> Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, p. 243; on Willibrord and Boniface, see pp. 203, 206, 221–23.

<sup>36</sup> Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttum von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft*, 2 vols (Tübingen, 1930–33), II, 674–76 (quotation at p. 676). For Caspar's assessment of Wilfrid, see pp. 677–89; on Willibrord, see pp. 690–91; and on Boniface, see pp. 695–722.

<sup>37</sup> Samuel J. Crawford, *Anglo-Saxon Influence on Western Christendom* (Cambridge, 1933).

<sup>38</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 171.

Many historians during this period interpreted the missions from the standpoint of their own Christian denomination. In his still fundamental *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* (1898–1911), the Catholic historian Albert Hauck wrote of Boniface's importance that

Bonifatius hat den deutschen Episkopat mit der Überzeugung erfüllt, dass die deutsche Kirche nur dann blühen könne, wenn sie in enger Gemeinschaft mit Rom lebe. Insofern ist allerdings einer der Männer, welche den Grund zu der Einheit der mittelalterlichen Kirche und zu der mittelalterlichen Papstmacht gelegt haben [...]. Wer vom Standpunkt der konfessionellen Polemik [...] kann annehmen, dass ohne Rom die Entwicklung der mittelalterlichen Kirche eine geradere, gesündere Richtung innegehaltes hätte, als sie es wirklich hat.<sup>39</sup>

Willibrord too was afforded such praise, if without quite the same glowing rhetoric.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile the English Catholic historian Christopher Dawson wrote similar praise in 1932:

St Boniface [...] had a deeper influence on the history of Europe than any Englishman who had ever lived [...]. To him is due the foundation of the mediaeval German Church [...]. It was through the work of St Boniface that Germany first became a living member of European society [...] and] it was the Anglo-Saxon monks and, above all, St Boniface who first realised the union of Teutonic initiative and Latin order which is the source of the whole mediaeval development of culture.<sup>41</sup>

Sometimes the optimistic opinion of these Catholic historians was not shared by Protestant contemporaries, notably Johannes Haller who argued that the Franks had actively resisted Boniface in order to preserve their *Landeskirche* from papal influence.<sup>42</sup> In these instances, interpreting Boniface had more to do with confessional polemic than historical analysis and *Quellenkritik*.

<sup>39</sup> Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 577: 'Boniface filled the German episcopate with the conviction that the German Church could shine then only if it lived in close community with Rome. In this respect he is one of the men who laid the foundations of the unity of the medieval church and medieval papal authority [...]. Who, from the standpoint of confessional polemic [...] could accept that without Rome the development of the medieval Church would have had a straighter and healthier direction than it actually did[?].'

<sup>40</sup> Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 422–23 and 431.

<sup>41</sup> Christopher Dawson, *The Making of Europe: An Introduction to the History of European Unity* (London, 1932), pp. 210–11, 213. See similar sentiments in Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, p. 262.

<sup>42</sup> Johannes Haller, *Das Papsttum: Idee und Wirklichkeit*, vol. I: *Die Grundlagen*, 3rd edn (Munich, 1965), pp. 283–89.



In 1943 Wilhelm Levison's Ford Lectures, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, fundamentally changed the field. Levison had long been an important figure at the Monumenta Germaniae Historica in the early twentieth century but, as a Jew, he was forced to flee Bonn in 1939 with his colleagues' help, at which point he was offered a new home in Durham. His dislocation prompted a vision of a new European idea of 'history', shorn of division. He wrote *England and the Continent* precisely to illustrate how the Anglo-Saxons had learnt from the Franks and vice versa.<sup>43</sup> Levison's ideals were taken up with enthusiasm by his pupils and especially Theodor Schieffer, who dedicated his 1954 book on Boniface and the 'foundations of Christian Europe' to his (by then deceased) teacher. Levison's lead was not taken up everywhere immediately; Stenton, for example, took little notice of Levison's lectures.<sup>44</sup> The general trend since has been away from presenting the Anglo-Saxons as national German or English heroes, although some parochialism has remained.<sup>45</sup>

Revision continued in earnest with Schieffer, who criticized the 'unfruitful polemic of earlier generations' on the first page of *Winfried-Bonifatius*.<sup>46</sup> Developing his 1951 study *Angelsachsen und Franken*, Schieffer firmly established the new paradigm in which Boniface's work was simultaneously part of the reorientation of the old Roman world and a contributing factor in the new directions of the Frankish Church. Turning then to the last page of the book one still finds strong echoes of Hauck and Dawson in his conclusion:

[Bonifatius] bleibt nicht nur eine über alle Geschichte hinweg verehrungswürdige Erscheinung; er gehört auch unverlierbar zu unserer deutschen und europäischen Geschichte, wir zehren von seinem Erbe, denn die von ihm vermittelte abschließende römisch-germanische Begegnung war geschichtsträchtig im höchsten Sinne; der Mönch aus Wessex, beim Stuhle Petri die Missionsvollmacht einholte, der bei Hessen, Thüringen, Baiern und Freizen, bei austrasischen und neustrischen Franken wirkte, der den universalkirchen

<sup>43</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. v–vii. See Story, *Carolingian Connections*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>44</sup> James Campbell, 'Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England*', in his *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), pp. 269–80 (pp. 273–74).

<sup>45</sup> On the problem of parochialism, as opposed to nationalism, see Janet L. Nelson, 'England and the Continent in the Ninth Century: I, Ends and Beginnings', *TRHS*, 6th series, 12 (2002), 1–22. It should also be noted that the title of Reuter's *The Greatest Englishman* was imposed upon the editor by the publisher.

<sup>46</sup> Theodor Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas*, 2nd edn (Darmstadt, 1972), p. 1: '[die] unfruchtbare Polemik früherer Generationen'.

Zusammenhalt erneuerte, er gehört zu den bahnbrechenden Initiatoren, zu den Baumeistern unseres Kulturkreises.<sup>47</sup>

Here Schieffer was still interpreting Boniface's career with a strongly Anglo-German and Catholic-centred perception of what constitutes 'Europe' and 'progress'; it is hard to imagine a Spanish or Danish historian writing a similar epitaph. The similarities between the conclusions of Hauck, Dawson, and Schieffer illustrate how constant overarching themes in the study of the saint could be; but Boniface was starting to appear as a central figure in a greater drama which took seriously the work of others around him.

A key aspect of this new paradigm was the ever-growing scholarship which afforded the Merovingian kingdoms real value.<sup>48</sup> Even Charles Martel, who was once considered typical for his age for allegedly despoiling the Church of its wealth, had his bad reputation expunged as a fiction created by Boniface and, later, Hincmar of Rheims.<sup>49</sup> Religious life under the Merovingians was revealed to have been more vibrant and comprised of different influences than had been given full credit. Kassius Hallinger and Eugen Ewig showed that Roman practices and a veneration for St Peter, for example, were strong before the arrival of any Anglo-Saxon reformers.<sup>50</sup> Friedrich Prinz, meanwhile, brought attention to the spread of

<sup>47</sup> Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 286: 'He remains not simply a justifiably venerated figure throughout history: he also belongs firmly to our German and European history. We live off his inheritance, because his mediation of the final Romano-German meeting was historically productive in the highest sense: the monk from Wessex, who kept by the missionary authority of the see of St Peter, who worked amongst the Hessians, Thuringians, Bavarians, Frisians, amongst the Austrasian and Neustrian Franks, who renewed the cohesion of the universal church, belongs to the pioneering founders, to the architects of our cultural circles.'

<sup>48</sup> Amongst the many textbooks now available on the Merovingian period, see for example Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (London, 1994); J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich*, Urban-Taschenbücher, 392, 4th edn (Stuttgart, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> For the older view, see Heinrich Brunner, 'Der Reiterdienst und die Anfänge des Lehnwesens', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanische Abteilung*, 8 (1887), 1–38. For reassessment, see the studies in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, especially Alain Dierkens, "Carolus monasteriorum multorum eversor ecclesiasticarum pecuniam in usus proprios communator"? Notes sur la politique monastique du maire du palais Charles Martel', pp. 277–94; Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*.

<sup>50</sup> Kassius Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen der bonifatianischen Wirksamkeit im Frankenreich', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 320–61; Eugen Ewig, 'Der Petrus- und Apostelkult im spätrömischen und fränkischen Gallien', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 71 (1960), 215–51.



Columbanian-Benedictine monasticism in the seventh century and the real political interest in the religious life.<sup>51</sup> The evident predominance of the *regula mixta* in the monastic life showed that concepts of 'Benedictine monasticism' were often applied by modern historians somewhat anachronistically.<sup>52</sup> The detailed analysis of more monastic foundations also led to new emphasis on certain figures involved in changing monastic practices such as Pirmin (d. 753), who founded Reichenau, Hornbach, and Murbach in contexts not so far removed from the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>53</sup> While it became clear that the Anglo-Saxons had not been alone in their work in the eighth century, archaeological evidence emerged that revealed many 'new' Anglo-Saxon continental churches and monasteries, such as Büraburg and Eichstätt, had actually been refounded from Frankish or Irish structures.<sup>54</sup> Not only were Willibrord, Boniface, and their followers not the trailblazing pioneers some

<sup>51</sup> Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung, 4. bis 8. Jahrhundert*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1972). See also now Barbara Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Manchester, 1999). On Columbanus and Columbanian monasticism, see *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. by Helen Clarke and Mary Brennan, BAR International Series, 113 (Oxford, 1981) and *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, Studies in Celtic History, 17 (Woodbridge, 1997).

<sup>52</sup> In addition to the previous note, see also Franz Staab, 'Bonifatius, die *regula sancti patris Benedicti* und die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', *AmKg*, 57 (2005), 55–69; Christopher Holdsworth, 'Saint Boniface the Monk', in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter, pp. 47–68, and Josef Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii: Fulda im Widerstreit der Observanzen', in *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, ed. by Gangolf Schrimpf, Fuldaer Studien, 7 (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1996), pp. 79–104.

<sup>53</sup> Theodor Mayer, 'Bonifatius und Pirmin', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 450–64; Arnold Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini: Studien zu Pirmin und den monastischen Vorstellungen des frühen Mittelalters*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften, 6 (Munich, 1972); Angenendt, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius: Ihr Verhältnis zu Mönchtum, Bischofsamt und Adel', in *Mönchtum, Episkopat und Adel zur Gründungszeit des Klosters Reichenau*, ed. by Arno Borst (Sigmaringen, 1974), pp. 251–304; Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius'.

<sup>54</sup> David Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments of the Anglo-Saxon Mission in Central Germany', *Archaeological Journal*, 140 (1983), 280–321; Parsons, 'Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Southern Germany: A Review of the Evidence', *EME*, 8 (1999), 31–67; Matthias Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen in Mitteldeutschland: Zur vorbonifatianischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen', in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. by Heinz Löwe, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 231–318; Franz Staab, 'Die Gründung der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg durch Bonifatius im Rahmen der fränkischen und päpstlichen Politik', *AmKg*, 40 (1988), 13–41.

historians supposed, but seventh-century Europe offered a vibrant and useful heritage which the Anglo-Saxons could appropriate and develop.

Merovingian missionary theory was also thoroughly re-evaluated by Wolfgang Fritze's 1969 thesis about the seventh-century diffusion of 'universal mission' or mission to all peoples.<sup>55</sup> Christians in the Roman Empire had not always interpreted the apostolic decree so widely, interpreting 'world' as a 'civilized world' extending only up to the Roman *limes*. Fritze, however, was able to demonstrate that from the seventh century onwards universal mission became a prevailing inspiration behind missionaries as disparate as the Irishman Columbanus (d. 615), Amandus from Lower Poitou (d. c. 675), and Willibrord. Many of Fritze's working details, such as giving the papacy a central role, came under fire, but the overall argument was widely accepted and remains influential.<sup>56</sup> The inclusion of Willibrord in the new analysis meant that the Anglo-Saxon missions appeared to have greater continuity with the Merovingian and Irish missions in seventh-century Belgium.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, study of the practical constraints on mission — particularly the dangers of the mission field itself and the need for military support — tempered the impression that the Anglo-Saxons' missionary work was a success.<sup>58</sup> In recent accounts of the conversion of Europe by Richard Fletcher and Arnold Angenendt, Willibrord and Boniface have come to be portrayed as figures who provided the organization and inspiration for subsequent missions under a 'universal church', most notably with Charlemagne's campaigns against the Saxons and Slavs.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Wolfgang H. Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio: Formeln, Träger und Wege universal-missionarischen Denkens im 7. Jahrhundert', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 3 (1969), 78–130.

<sup>56</sup> See for example Arnold Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, 175 (1973), 63–113 (pp. 104–07); Robert A. Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface: Christianity and Paganism in Gaul', in *The Seventh Century: Changes and Continuity*, ed. by Jacques Fontaine and J. N. Hillgarth (London, 1992), pp. 154–68 (pp. 162–63); Lutz E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung: Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995), p. 16.

<sup>57</sup> Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio', pp. 81–106.

<sup>58</sup> Wolfgang H. Fritze, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Bistums Utrecht: Franken und Freisen 690–734', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 35 (1971), 107–51; Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', pp. 208–24.

<sup>59</sup> Richard Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity 371–1386 AD* (London, 1997), pp. 199–213. On the necessity for strong military or political backing in successful missions, see Arnold Angenendt, *Kaiserherrschaft und Königstaufe: Kaiser, Könige und Papste als geistliche Patrone in der abendländischen Missionsgeschichte*, Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung, 15 (Berlin, 1984); Angenendt, 'The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons Considered Against the

Moreover much of the missionary effort was targeted at residual pagan practices and folk superstitions rather than actual pagans.<sup>60</sup>

The distinction between 'mission' and 'Christianization' has become increasingly blurred with the influence of anthropology on historical scholarship. The theory of 'enculturation', for example, portrayed the conversion of a society as a drawn-out dialectical encounter between belief systems, rather than as the simple supplanting of one faith with another.<sup>61</sup> In studies of the Anglo-Saxon missions, enculturation has most explicitly been cited by Anton Weiler in his 1989 biography of Willibrord, in which the Anglo-Saxon's Frisian career was presented as the product of interactions between a variety of Christian and non-Christian cultures.<sup>62</sup> Lutz von Padberg employed a similar gradualist model of conversion in his 1995 *Mission und Christianisierung*, although he did not cite anthropology as a direct influence.<sup>63</sup> The undoubted social reality of religious change, however, is often only ever evident in sources such as hagiographies in which the nature and content of the process is reimagined according to literary, theological, or political thought. These problems are not always evenly treated in studies of the missions but do perhaps present a major concern that is receiving more attention.<sup>64</sup>

Background of the Early Medieval Mission', in *Angli e sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare*, Settimane, 32 (Spoleto, 1986), pp. 747–81; Michael Richter, 'Practical Aspects of the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. by Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 362–76.

<sup>60</sup> Robert A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 208–11; Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface', pp. 163–68; Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 416–28.

<sup>61</sup> See for example Michael Richter, 'Models of Conversion in the Early Middle Ages', in *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and England in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Doris Edel (Dublin, 1995), pp. 116–28. The concept of 'enculturation' owes much to the theories of Clifford Geertz and essays such as 'Religion as a Cultural System', in his *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London, 1973), pp. 87–125. Geertz's theories have been given undue attention by historians at the expense of other anthropological theorists: see John Goodman, 'History and Anthropology', in *The Routledge Companion to Historiography*, ed. by Michael Bentley (London, 2002), pp. 783–804 (pp. 788–89).

<sup>62</sup> Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, pp. 16–18.

<sup>63</sup> Von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, p. 20.

<sup>64</sup> The work of von Padberg, also most recently developed in his study of preaching *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontation: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 51 (Stuttgart, 2003), often provides good insight into the theological horizons of missionary thought but his treatment of sources, while critical, can often be straight and thinly contextualized.

One 'social reality' that has enjoyed reframed thought on the period is the role of the aristocracy as political players alongside the king.<sup>65</sup> This increased awareness of the intricacies of late Merovingian and early Carolingian politics has affected perceptions of the Anglo-Saxons' work because the two were inexorably linked. Willibrord, for example, was no longer seen as simply a supporter of Pippin II's subjugation of Frisia but also as a friend of the competitive nobilities of Trier, Franconia, and Frisia.<sup>66</sup> Charter evidence has, in such studies, played an important role in identifying both the ways in which figures like Willibrord and Boniface were bound to political factions and how the promotion of saints' cults affected monastic landholdings.<sup>67</sup> New questions had to be asked, in other words, about the role the Anglo-Saxons played as actors within Frankish society as a whole. When studying the *vitae*, moreover, the Anglo-Saxons' aristocratic connections, and consequently the different Frankish audiences for the hagiography, can become central. One need only look at the way that Liudger venerated and promoted Willibrord and Boniface to understand how important such groups were in the development of the saints' reputations.

Studies of the early medieval world from many different perspectives have also shed new light on the insular background to the Anglo-Saxon 'missions'. Michael Richter and Augustine van Berkum, for example, argued that Willibrord was more likely to have been influenced by Irish monasticism than by Wilfrid of York, the arch-Roman hero of Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>68</sup> Consequently new emphasis was

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, Stuart Airlie, 'The Aristocracy', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II: c. 700–c. 900, ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 431–50; Matthias Werner, *Adelsfamilien im Umkreis der frühen Karolinger: Die Verwandtschaft Irminas von Oeren und Adelas von Pfalzel* (Sigmaringen, 1982).

<sup>66</sup> Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, pp. 112–47; Frans Theuws, 'Landed Property and Manorial Organisation in Northern Austrasia: Some Considerations and a Case Study', in *Images of the Past*, ed. by Nico Roymans and Frans Theuws (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 299–407; Marios Costambeys, 'An Aristocratic Community on the Northern Frankish Frontier 690–726', *EME*, 3 (1994), 39–62.

<sup>67</sup> Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger'; Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley 400–1000*, CSMLT, 4th Series, 47 (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>68</sup> The important studies are Michael Richter, 'Der irische Hintergrund der angelsächsischen Mission', in *Die Iren und Europa*, ed. by Löwe, pp. 120–37; Richter, 'The Young Willibrord', in *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande*, ed. by Kiesel and Schroeder, pp. 25–30; Richter, 'England and Ireland in the Time of Willibrord', in *Willibrord*, ed. by Bange and Weiler, pp. 35–50; Augustine van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried: Een onderzoek naar hun wederzijdse betrekkingen', *Sacris*

placed on the role of Ecgbert, living in Ireland in Rath Melsigi, for sending Willibrord to Frisia.<sup>69</sup> Boniface and his circle, meanwhile, have recently begun to be understood better in relation to their Southumbrian background and in particular their reverence for the work of Aldhelm of Malmesbury.<sup>70</sup> It is now possible to understand the Anglo-Saxon missionaries better through the intellectual and social circles from which they came, rather than just in terms of their continental activities. Not, of course, that the Anglo-Saxon background was itself sealed from continental influences.<sup>71</sup> The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity was itself instigated by Pope Gregory the Great in Rome in the late sixth century, opening Anglo-Saxon society to Roman and Greek influences in the following centuries.<sup>72</sup> At the same time it is now possible to detect some Frankish political influences in the seventh century, although the significance of the evidence is uncertain.<sup>73</sup> In terms of economics, too, it is evident that North Sea trade — particularly with Frisia — meant that the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England were an integral part of an interconnected Northern European world, rather than isolated or peripheral units.<sup>74</sup> From such perspectives the subsequent involvement of Anglo-Saxons in

*erudiri*, 23 (1978/79), 347–415. See also Daihbi Ó Cróinín, 'Rath Melsigi, Willibrord and the Earliest Echternach Manuscripts', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 17–49; Eugene Honée, 'St Willibrord in Recent Historiography', in *Missions and Missionaries*, ed. by Pieter N. Holtrop and Hugh McLeod, Studies in Church History Subsidia, 13 (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 16–31.

<sup>69</sup> Knut Schäferdiek, 'Fragen der frühen angelsächsischen Festlandmission', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 28 (1994), 172–95.

<sup>70</sup> Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*; Orchard, *Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, esp. pp. 60–67; Pádraig P. Ó Néill, 'Bonifaz und Virgil: Konflikt zweier Kulturen', in *Virgil von Salzburg, Missionar und Gelehrter*, ed. by Heinz Dopsch and Roswitha Juffinger (Salzburg, 1985), pp. 76–83; Barbara Yorke, 'The Bonifatian Mission and Female Religious in Wessex', *EME*, 7 (1998), 145–72.

<sup>71</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*; Story, *Carolingian Connections*.

<sup>72</sup> Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, pp. 51–77; Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 177–87; Michael Lapidge, 'Byzantium, Rome and England in the Early Middle Ages', in *Roma fra oriente e occidente*, Settimane, 49. 1 (Spoleto, 2002), pp. 363–400.

<sup>73</sup> Ian Wood, 'Frankish Hegemony in England', in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. by Martin Carver (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 235–42.

<sup>74</sup> Stéphane Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons du haut moyen âge*, 2 vols (Lille, 1983). See also the summaries of evidence in David M. Wilson, 'England and the Continent in the Eighth Century: An Archaeological Viewpoint', in *Angli e sassoni*, pp. 219–44, and Stéphane Lebecq, 'Routes of Change: Production and Distribution in the West (5th–8th Century)', in *The Transformation of the Roman World AD 400–900*, ed. by Leslie Webster and Michelle Brown (London, 1997), pp. 67–78.

Frankish, Frisian, German, and Italian affairs can be seen as part of a broader world of cross-Channel relations.

An important, if so far small, literature has developed which has sought to understand the cults that arose from the Anglo-Saxon missions. Such studies are growing in importance as focus shifts from the saints themselves to the societies that venerated them. So far Boniface has again received more attention than anyone else with large-scale studies by Petra Kehl and Lutz von Padberg.<sup>75</sup> Smaller studies have also sought to explain why in later centuries Willibrord was presented as Frisian and Willibald as a relative of the Ottonians.<sup>76</sup> Karl Hauck, meanwhile, emphasized the importance of the physical setting of Liudger's grave in Werden for the developing cult.<sup>77</sup> A telling article on the cult of Leoba, again by Kehl, illustrated how it took centuries for the Anglo-Saxon to be venerated as a saint without reference to Boniface.<sup>78</sup> The power of a martyr's cult lived long in the popular imagination and many of the 'missionary saints' were venerated because of their association with Boniface. It is imperative for our interpretations of the Anglo-Saxon missions to understand the *vitae* and changing hagiographical traditions in relation to developments in the cult of saints in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Those involved in the 'missions' other than Willibrord or Boniface have attracted uneven attention. The most extensive study has been afforded to the family of Liudger in Frisia and Willibald and his brother Wynnebald in Bavaria.<sup>79</sup> The

<sup>75</sup> Petra Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754–1200)*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Abtei und Diözese Fulda, 26 (Fulda, 1993); Lutz E. von Padberg, *Studien zur Bonifatiusverehrung: Zur Geschichte des Codex Ragyndrudis und der Fuldaer Reliquien des Bonifatius*, Fuldaer Hochschulschriften, 25 (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1996). See also now Mostert, 754, pp. 68–83; James T. Palmer, 'The Frankish Cult of Martyrs and the Case of the Two Saints Boniface', *Revue bénédictine*, 114 (2004), 326–48; Petra Kehl, 'Entstehung und Verbreitung des Bonifatiuskultes', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 127–50.

<sup>76</sup> Rolf H. Bremmer, 'Willibrord through Anglo-Saxon and Frisian Eyes: From History to Myth', *Freisische Studien*, 1 (1992), 1–28; Stefan Weinfurter, 'Das Bistum Willibalds im Dienste des Königs: Eichstätt im frühen Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte*, 50 (1987), 3–40.

<sup>77</sup> Karl Hauck, 'Apostolischer Geist im genus sacerdotale der Liudgeriden: Die "Kanonisation" Liudgers und Alfrids Bischoffsgrablege in Essen-Werden (Beiträge und Miszellen)', in *Sprache und Recht: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by Karl Hauck and other, 2 vols (Berlin, 1986), II, 191–219.

<sup>78</sup> Petra Kehl, 'Die Verehrung der hl. Lioba', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter*, 67 (1991), 141–50.

<sup>79</sup> On all three figures, see Lutz E. von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie: Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in den Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhochdeutschen Kirchengeschichte, 83,



ways in which the family ties of both groups were shaped by theological recasting of the natural family within the spiritual family have been profitably studied by Lutz von Padberg.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, the question of whether Willibald was Bishop of Erfurt or Bishop of Eichstätt has been the subject of much (inconclusive) debate.<sup>81</sup> Many of the other saints and their *vitae*, however, have received precious little attention because of perceived historical inaccuracies in the source material or the comparative importance of Willibrord, Boniface, Liudger, and Willibald over their contemporaries and friends. Boniface's important successor Lull of Mainz, for example, has only been studied in any detail once since 1951.<sup>82</sup> Notable scholarly works on the *Vita Willehadi*, *Sermo Sualonis*, *Vita Gregorii*, and *Vita altera Bonifatii* remain few and far between.<sup>83</sup> The *vitae* about Wynnebald, Burchard, and

2nd edn (Mainz, 1997). On Liudger and his family, see Karl Schmid, 'Die "Liudgeriden": Erscheinung und Problematik einer Adelsfamilie', in *Geschichtsschreibung und geistiges Leben im Mittelalter: Festschrift Heinz Löwe*, ed. by Karl Hauck and Hubert Mordek (Cologne, 1978), pp. 71–101; Hauck, 'Apostolischer Geist'.

<sup>80</sup> Von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*. See also Basilius Senger, 'Liudger in der Utrechter Väter-Tradition', in *Studia Westfalica: Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte und religiösen Volkskunde Westfalens*, ed. by Max Bierbaum, *Westfalica Sacra*, 4 (Münster, 1973), pp. 341–53.

<sup>81</sup> Theodor Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken: Zwei Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 8. Jahrhunderts', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Socialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1950*, 20 (Wiesbaden, 1951), 1327–1539 (p. 1465); Andreas Bigelmair, 'Die Gründung des mitteldeutschen Bistümer', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 247–87 (pp. 280–86); Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, 'Die Gründungszeit der mitteldeutschen Bistümer und das Jahr des Concilium Germanicum', in *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger*, ed. by Helmut Beumann, 2 vols, *Mitteldeutsche Forschungen*, 74. 2 (Cologne, 1974), II, 71–136; Gerhard Pfeiffer, 'Erfurt oder Eichstätt? Zur Biographie des Bischofs Willibald', in *ibid.*, II, 137–61.

<sup>82</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull. Before 1951, see Michael Tangl, 'Studien zur Neuausgabe der Briefe des hl. Bonifatius und Lullus, Teil 2', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, 41 (1917), 23–101 (pp. 178–95); Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 290–95; Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1470–1529.

<sup>83</sup> On the *VW* had, see Gerlinde Niemeyer, 'Der Herkunft der *Vita Willehadi*', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 12 (1956), 17–35, and Joachim Ehlers, 'Die Sachsenmission als heiligungsgeschichtliches Ereignis', in *Vita Religiosa im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Kaspar Elm zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. by Franz J. Felten and Nikolas Jaspert, *Berliner historische Studien*, 31, *Ordenstudien*, 13 (Berlin, 1999), pp. 37–53; on Liudger, *VG*, see Heinz Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 74 (1954), 79–91; on Ermenrich, *SS*, see Lynda L. Coon, 'Historical Fact and Exegetical Fiction in the Carolingian *Vita s. Sualonis*', *Church History*, 72 (2003), 1–24; on the *VaB*, see Wolfert S. van Egmond, 'Misgivings about Miracles in Carolingian Hagiography from Utrecht', in *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic Literature*, ed. by Karin E. Olsen, Antonia Harbus, and Tette Hofstra (Leuven, 2004), pp. 69–79.

Wigbert of Fritzlar have barely attracted any attention at all. Hagiographical traditions from Fulda have received more attention with some good articles on the spiritual imagery and politics in the *Vita Sturmi* and the *Vita Aegili*.<sup>84</sup> Rudolf's *Vita Leobae* has also received much attention, although there has been a tendency to see the work out of its ninth-century context and instead as part of an abstract history of women in the early Middle Ages, devoid of much relevance to Fulda or Rudolf.<sup>85</sup> Recent books by Ian Wood, Lutz von Padberg, and Richard Fletcher have provided a more balanced picture of the personnel involved in the Anglo-Saxon missions.<sup>86</sup> There remain, however, figures and texts that are fundamentally misunderstood because of a paucity of careful and closely focussed studies on them.

Modern perceptions of the 'missions' have, overall, shifted towards a more nuanced appreciation of their part in a highly complex and changing world and away from the idea that the would-be missionaries alone brought light to some imagined 'Dark Age'. Recent studies have attempted to understand the different intellectual, political, and social contexts in both Britain and on the continent that came into play to shape the work of the Anglo-Saxons, their circles, their rivals, and the sources they produced. There has also been a move towards seeing the sources as literary arguments, although the full potential of this approach has only slowly been realized. It has, in some respects, taken the greater volume of research on the period to appreciate influences and motives that may have been obscure to earlier historians. The methodology of such an approach has also needed development

<sup>84</sup> Gereon Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus als Quelle zu Fragen aus der Geschichte Fuldas im Zeitalter der anianischen Reform', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 42 (1992), 19–48; Petra Kehl, 'Die Entstehungszeit der *Vita Sturmi* des Eigil: Versuch einer Neu-datierung', *AmKg*, 46 (1994), 11–20; Marie-Elisabeth Brunert, 'Fulda als Kloster *in eremo*: Zentrale Quellen über die Gründung im Spiegel der hagiographischen Tradition', in *Kloster Fulda*, ed. by Schrimpf, pp. 59–78.

<sup>85</sup> Amongst the better analyses of Rudolf's *VL* are Dagmar B. Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon Women in the Religious Life: A Study of the Status and Position of Women in an Early Medieval Society' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1985), pp. 42 n. 38, 67–68, and 224–42; Nelson, 'Women and the Word'; Yitzhak Hen, '*Milites Christi utriusque sexus*: Gender and the Politics of Conversion in the Circle of Boniface', *Revue bénédictine*, 109 (1999), 17–31. Treat with more caution Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 271–82; Pauline Head, '*Integritas* in Rudolph of Fulda's *Vita Leobae abbatisiae*', *Parergon*, 13 (1995), 33–51; and Lisa M. Bitel, *Women in Early Medieval Europe 400–1100* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 141–44.

<sup>86</sup> Von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung* and *Inszenierung*; Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, pp. 197–222; Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 57–141.



and refinement and will continue to do so. Emphasis on certain saints and sources has also meant that justice has yet to be done to the full range and breadth of the Anglo-Saxons' activities. In order for study of England and the continent in the early Middle Ages to progress, the emphases need to change and many long-standing assumptions about the sources need to be relinquished.

### *Reading Hagiography*

The evidence for the activities of the Anglo-Saxon missions is copious and varied, especially compared to other areas of the early Middle Ages.<sup>87</sup> The letters and treatises Anglo-Saxons produced abroad, alongside the manuscripts they owned, present a rich assortment of the thoughts and contexts which framed aspects of the missions as they unfolded. When exploring the shifting reputations of the Anglo-Saxons there is also a wealth of hagiographical tradition, much of which was begun by writers on the continent who were closely associated with the missions and related enterprises. Analysis of the hagiography will form the core of the present study because these texts offer the most widespread responses to the work and traditions of the Anglo-Saxons on the continent.

The predominance of hagiographical evidence necessitates some comments on the problems of defining what 'hagiography' is.<sup>88</sup> Standard usage normally implies

<sup>87</sup> There are a number of 'guides to sources' for the early medieval period. The standard is Wilhelm Wattenbach, Wilhelm Levison, and Heinz Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter: Vorzeit und Karolinger*, 6 vols (Weimar, 1952–90) in which, on the Anglo-Saxon *vitae*, see vols II: *Die Karolinger vom Anfang des 8. Jahrhunderts bis zum Tode Karls des Großen* (Weimar, 1953) and VI: *Die Karolinger vom Vertrag von Verdun bis zum Herrschaftsantritt der Herrscher aus dem sächsischen Hause: Das östfränkische Reich* (Weimar, 1990). Walter Berschin provides a useful analysis of biographical form and the different schools of Anglo-Saxon *vitae* in his *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. III: *Karolingische Biographie 750–920 n. Chr.*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters, 10 (Stuttgart, 1991). Other recent guides can be found in *Hagiographies*, ed. by Guy Philippart, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1996), particularly in vol. II: Theodor Klüppel, 'Die Germania (750–950)', pp. 161–209; and Marijke Carasso-Kok, 'Le diocèse d'Utrecht, 900–1200', pp. 373–411.

<sup>88</sup> Guy Philippart, 'Hagiographes et hagiographie, hagiologes et hagiologie: des mots et des concepts', *Hagiographica*, 1 (1994), 1–16; Klaus Herbers, 'Hagiographie im Kontext – Konzeption und Zielvorstellung', in *Hagiographie im Kontext: Wirkungsweisen und Möglichkeiten historischer Auswertung*, ed. by Dieter Bauer and Klaus Herbers, Beiträge zur Hagiographie, 1 (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. ix–xxviii (pp. xi–xii, xvi–xxi); Julia M. H. Smith, 'Early Medieval Hagiography in the Late Twentieth Century', *EME*, 1 (1992), 69–76.

a narrative account of a saintly life, passion, or relic translation, but in practice a precise definition is difficult. A century ago Hippolyte Delehaye's best formulation was that hagiography ought to relate to the cult of saints and should be a work of religious character which aimed at edification.<sup>89</sup> This is unsatisfactory because a *vita* could function without any cult, although it could still draw on an understanding of how people engaged with such institutions.<sup>90</sup> A further problem is that hagiography has 'a multiplicity of forms' creating 'an infinitely flexible genre' (as Ian Wood put it).<sup>91</sup> The term 'genre' in this situation might appear misplaced because of its permissiveness, a problem which led Marc van Uytenghe to propose that conceptual unity came from 'hagiographical discourse' and the way an audience engages with the subject.<sup>92</sup> The flexibility of hagiography (or its discourse) makes it more difficult to distinguish *vitae* from sermons about saints or martyrologies, and some people would now argue that in fact these different kinds of sources are part of the same spectrum of hagiography.<sup>93</sup> Recent work on 'réécriture', examining both literary and manuscript traditions, has certainly profitably explored the ways in which hagiographical stories could be adapted to different forms for a range of effects and times.<sup>94</sup> Felice Lifshitz has gone as far as to propose

<sup>89</sup> Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. by Donald Attwater, 4th edn (Dublin, 1998), pp. 1–3; originally, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (Brussels, 1905). For a guide to hagiography which follows Delehaye's definitions, see Jacques Dubois and Jean-Loup Lemaitre, *Sources et méthodes de l'hagiographie médiévale* (Paris, 1993), which focuses on different aspects of the cult of saints.

<sup>90</sup> Felice Lifshitz, 'Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative', *Viator*, 25 (1994), 95–113 (pp. 96–97).

<sup>91</sup> Ian Wood, 'The Use and Abuse of Latin Hagiography in the Early Medieval West', in *East and West: Modes of Communication*, ed. by Euangelos Chrysos and Ian Wood, TRW, 1 (Leiden, 1999), pp. 93–109. For a different take on the problem, see François Dolbeau, 'Les hagiographes au travail: collecte et traitement des documents écrits (IX<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles)', in *Manuscrits hagiographiques et travail des hagiographes*, ed. by Martin Heinzelmänn, Beihefte der Francia, 24 (Sigmaringen, 1992), pp. 49–76.

<sup>92</sup> Marc van Uytenghe, 'L'hagiographie: un genre chrétien ou antique tardif?', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 111 (1993), 135–88.

<sup>93</sup> Philippart, 'Hagiographes', p. 2; Wolfert S. van Egmond, 'The Audiences of Early Medieval Hagiographical Texts: Some Questions Revisited', in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. by Marco Mostert (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 41–67 (pp. 64–65).

<sup>94</sup> See for example François Dolbeau, 'Prose, rhythm et mètre: réécritures dans le dossier de saint Ouen', in *Le réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval: Transformations formelles et idéologiques*, ed. by Monique Goulet and Martin Heinzelmänn, Beihefte der Francia, 58

that there was no ‘conceptual category’ of hagiography — either as a discourse or as a genre — before the twelfth century, at least none that was distinguishable from historiography.<sup>95</sup> This is perhaps to go too far: certainly by the eighth century most narrative biographies about saints were preserved in manuscripts alongside other texts of a similar narrative nature rather than alongside *historiae*, martyrologies, or sermons, so there was some perception of a category on an organizational level.<sup>96</sup> For the purposes of this study, the inclusion of a text under the banner ‘hagiography’ will depend on perceptions of the text rather than just saints’ cults or literary conventions.

The way modern scholars approach the study of hagiography raises a number of issues applicable to the study of most literary sources, particularly in the emphasis on context, audience, and authority. One issue which has repeatedly concerned scholars is the extent to which saints’ Lives reflect genuine historical pasts. Even before postmodernism, scholars despaired at the blatant artificiality and repetitive constructs of hagiography.<sup>97</sup> One can sift hagiographies for distinctive detail, but one should not see this as necessarily separating fact from fiction.<sup>98</sup> In studying Boniface, Schieffer found Willibald’s *Vita Bonifatii* indispensable (‘unentbehrlich’) but sketchy (‘lückenhafte’) because, although it provided a framework for the story, it did not provide the hard detail of the letter collections.<sup>99</sup> Schieffer overlooked many more hagiographies about Boniface on the grounds that they were derivative or worse. In practice, however, most hagiographies are derivative by their very nature because the subject has to appear to live up to saintly standards; the authority

(Ostfildern, 2003), pp. 231–50, and other essays in the same volume. For a full treatment of the issues surrounding *réécriture*, see Monique Goullet, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques: Essai sur les réécritures de Vies de saints dans l’Occident latin médiéval (VIII<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> s.)*, Hagiologia, 4 (Turnhout, 2005). See also Lifshitz, ‘Beyond Positivism’, p. 99.

<sup>95</sup> Lifshitz, ‘Beyond Positivism’. See also the comments of Friedrich Lotter, ‘Methodisches zur Gewinnung historischer Erkenntnisse und hagiographischen Quellen’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 229 (1979), 298–356 (p. 314), that hagiography is less a genre and more ‘eine literarisch-historisch Kategorie’.

<sup>96</sup> James T. Palmer, ‘Hagiography and Time in the Earliest Carolingian *vitae* of St Boniface’, in *Zeit und Vergangenheit*, ed. by Richard Corradini and Helmut Reimitz (forthcoming); Dolbeau, ‘Les hagiographes au travail’, p. 49.

<sup>97</sup> Geary, ‘Saints, Scholars, and Society: The Elusive Goal’, in his *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), pp. 9–29 (p. 17); Delehaye, *Legends of the Saints*, pp. 10–39.

<sup>98</sup> Lotter, ‘Methodisches’, pp. 299–300; Lifshitz, ‘Beyond Positivism’, pp. 100–02; Dolbeau, ‘Les hagiographes au travail’, p. 56.

<sup>99</sup> Schieffer, *Winfid-Bonifatius*, p. 103 and pp. 295–96.

of hagiography does not come from historical authenticity and originality.<sup>100</sup> In this present study, the most well-worn motifs and wildest fantasies of hagiographers need to be investigated for the ideas they betray. Even in imitation and invention there remains a relationship between narrative and the social ‘mentality’ or situation which produced it.<sup>101</sup>

Historical reality cannot readily be separated from the narratives which describe it. For a start, few would now contest the view that narratives are necessarily partisan discourses.<sup>102</sup> This does not mean, however, that discourses are necessarily abstract. When a holy woman imitates behaviour from the hagiographies she has read, for example, she will not become less real in herself for actualizing textual models. There are discrete facts about the past, even if their claims to truth are dissolved through the process of description.<sup>103</sup> Most importantly, the world ‘dehors la texte’ has a tendency to impose itself on the act of creation; and, once created, a text is expected to have implications outside its immediate linguistic reference points. Methodologically, the most attractive route away from scepticism is through the analysis of multiple parallel discourses. Any narrated ‘fiction of fact’ invites us to scrutinize four broad areas (where possible): its referents in the past, its present situation, its contemporary parallels, and its reception. The objects of study will be the ways and places in which specific meanings in different discourses coincide, mutate, and deviate. One may not be able to discuss ‘ideal and reality’ as simple binaries, but one can observe how different ideas and figures change across

<sup>100</sup> Goullet, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques*, pp. 230–31. For examples demonstrating the importance of biblical models for miracle stories, see Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event 1000–1215*, 2nd edn (Aldershot, 1987), esp. pp. 44–51 and 57–65; William D. MacCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede* (Toronto, 1994), pp. 16–43.

<sup>101</sup> The classic examples of this approach are František Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger: Studien zur Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit* (Prague, 1965) and Joseph-Claude Poulin, *L’idéal de sainteté dans l’Aquitaine carolingienne (750–950)* (Québec, 1975). See also von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 24–28. For methodological discussion, see Lotter, ‘Methodisches’, esp. pp. 303–04, and Otto Gerhard Oexle, ‘Deutungsschemata der sozialen Wirklichkeit im frühen und hohen Mittelalter: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Wissens’, in *Mentalitäten im Mittelalter: Methodische und Inhaltliche Probleme*, ed. by František Graus (Sigmaringen, 1987), pp. 65–118.

<sup>102</sup> Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987); Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, 3 vols (Paris, 1983–85), trans. by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols (Chicago, 1984–88).

<sup>103</sup> For a recent provocative defence of ‘facts’, see Paul A. Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge: Against Relativism and Constructivism* (Oxford, 2006).

discourses which operate under different schema (across legal or literary sources, for example).

For hagiography, the key implication of reading discourses is that we will be studying a range of intentions, complicated by author-audience relationships and a series of conscious and unconscious motivations.<sup>104</sup> The most obvious of these intentions are those the author explicitly or implicitly sets out in the course of the text. It is important to be aware of the potential variety of authorial intentions in a single text as, particularly in saints' Lives, each episode could be written with a different message and use in mind.<sup>105</sup> The close proximity of 'imagined past' and 'creative present' — that is, if a hagiographer composed his or her work close to the time being written about — often meant that the freedom of the author was restricted by the memories of the living or by a present that was actually shaped by the subject of the historical writing.<sup>106</sup> There are also intentions associated with the reproduction and reception of a *vita*. By noting what other texts were copied alongside a particular *vita*, it is possible to see some of the contexts in which they were considered meaningful beyond those initially established by the author.<sup>107</sup> One can also study where and when a text is referred to or borrowed from in other texts, thus revealing further how it was interpreted away from the author.

The (re)construction of hermeneutic meanings is necessarily a product of examining what Gabrielle Spiegel has called the 'social logic of the text'.<sup>108</sup> Each text

<sup>104</sup> For a recent case for making intentions the object of hermeneutic consideration, see Mark Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 31–77. For a subsequent debate on Bevir's ideas, see Victoria Brown, 'On Some Problems for Weak Intentionalism for Intellectual History', *History and Theory*, 41 (2002), 198–208, and Bevir's response, 'How to Be an Intentionalist', *History and Theory*, 41 (2002), 209–17.

<sup>105</sup> This can be complicated further through later reuse. Whereas Willibald, *VB*, is copied in chapters so long as to be too unwieldy for liturgical use in the earliest manuscript (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 1086), the scribe of the later ninth-century copy St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 552, envisaged more discrete divisions which may suggest liturgical use.

<sup>106</sup> The seminal example is that of St Martin: Claire Stancliffe, *St Martin and his Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1983), p. 71. See also Paul Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present*, 127 (1990), 3–38.

<sup>107</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, 'The Audience for Latin Historiography in the Early Middle Ages: Text Transmission and Manuscript Dissemination', in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, 32 (Vienna, 1994), pp. 96–114; Geary, 'Saints, Scholars, and Society', pp. 18–22.

<sup>108</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism and the Social Logic of Text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 59–86 (pp. 77–86).

fulfils a distinctive role in society that is a response to needs individual to a particular group, place, and time.<sup>109</sup> Focus on *mentalités* can be misleading if not grounded in the situation of the writers involved.<sup>110</sup> Meanings are not dictated purely by convention but can often be the result of creative uses of language which are grasped best through reference to associated signs or indicators in the context of an utterance.<sup>111</sup> A famous example discussed by the philosopher Donald Davidson is Mrs Malaprop's comment 'that was a nice derangement of epitaphs' which, despite its conventional meaning, was understood by all to mean 'that was a nice arrangement of epithets' because it followed a speech and the context strongly suggested Mrs Malaprop intended to praise the speaker.<sup>112</sup> There is to be a meeting, therefore, of literary interpretations of texts combined with an anthropology-inspired study of the texts' places in wider systems of cultural meaning and symbolic communication. This approach has been pioneered most recently by Peter Brown to reflect the changing world views of early medieval Christian microcosms.<sup>113</sup> In practice, interpreting texts and establishing contexts quickly collapse into the same project because of the interdependence of the evidence.<sup>114</sup> The escape

<sup>109</sup> This has been profitably pursued recently on a number of fronts: *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by Scharer and Scheibelreiter; Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994); *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge, 2000); Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004).

<sup>110</sup> Geary, 'Saints, Scholars, and Society', p. 22.

<sup>111</sup> In the philosophy of language this idea has been developed most notably by Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1958), cc. 78–87, and Donald Davidson, 'A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs', in his *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, ed. by Ernest LePore (Oxford, 1986), pp. 433–46. On the possible application of the idea in history, see Bevir, *Logic of the History of Ideas*, pp. 32–52.

<sup>112</sup> Davidson, 'Nice Derangement of Epitaphs'.

<sup>113</sup> See especially Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, and the praise for its approach by Wood, 'Use and Abuse of Latin Hagiography', p. 102. On some of the principles of the history of *mentalités*, see George Duby, 'Histoire des mentalités', in *L'histoire et ses méthodes*, ed. by Charles Samaran (Paris, 1961), pp. 937–66, and *Mentalitäten im Mittelalter*, ed. by Graus.

<sup>114</sup> John Moreland, *Archaeology and Text* (London, 2001), pp. 77–97. On the broader problem of objective knowledge, and the interdependence of facts on each other to obtain truth values, see Arthur Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 94–111; Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1970); Donald Davidson, 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in his *Truth and Interpretation*, pp. 307–19; Bevir, *Logic of the History of Ideas*, pp. 78–126.



context offers us from the ‘prison house of language’ still leaves us in a constructed environment. The benefit, however, is that we can still explore the wider coherence of assorted data.

The emphasis on specific situations of writing and copying now means that, for each text, work has to be put into the assembly of as much data as possible so as to be able to contextualize it rigorously.<sup>115</sup> A good modern example of this approach is Thomas Head’s *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints* (1989). By focussing on a well-documented centre of hagiography — the diocese of Orléans — Head was able to construct a full picture of the institutional and intellectual contexts which shaped the ‘day-to-day practice’ of the cult of saints.<sup>116</sup> In the case of studying a disparate group like the Anglo-Saxons on the continent, there will necessarily be a tradeoff between depth and detail because so many communities are involved. The letter collections alone reveal that the Anglo-Saxons preserved widespread networks to support their work.<sup>117</sup> It is essential to examine localized case studies, but they must be considered flexible within their broader contexts. The story itself should dictate topics and contexts of enquiry, not artificially imposed academic compartmentalism.<sup>118</sup>

Studies of missionary hagiography about the Anglo-Saxons have in recent years benefited greatly from the very different work of Lutz von Padberg and Ian Wood, which respectively represent the ‘social mentality’ and situation-specific approaches to studying saints’ Lives. In *Heilige und Familie* (1981, rev. 1997), von Padberg showed how saints like Boniface were defined in hagiography around themes which both reflected their associations with the people who commemorated them and helped to legitimize their successors, particularly where there was tension between ideas of natural and spiritual family. Saints and mission were here seen as the products of social and religious traditions, promulgated by distinct groups. Ian Wood’s *Missionary Life* (2001), meanwhile, examined the textual communities who produced saints’ Lives about missionary activity, moving from time and place

<sup>115</sup> Spiegel, ‘History, Historicism and the Social Logic of the Text’, pp. 77–83; Geary, ‘Saints, Scholars, and Society’, pp. 18–29; Matthew Innes, ‘Using the Past, Interpreting the Present, Influencing the Future’, in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 1–8 (p. 4).

<sup>116</sup> Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans 800–1200*, CSMLT, 4th series, 14 (Cambridge, 1989), p. 19.

<sup>117</sup> McKitterick, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*.

<sup>118</sup> See, for example, Bruno LaTour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Harlow, 1993), pp. 1–8. I reject the more extreme relativism of some of LaTour’s work, but the point he makes here is a good one.

as the story of conversion dictated and, significantly, noting how different traditions affected later communities. Central to Wood's story of European mission were, of course, the *vitae* about the Anglo-Saxons' missions. In seeking to outline the different ideals of medieval mission in relation to political circumstance, Wood explicitly took influence from Walter Goffart's *Narrators of Barbarian History* (1988).<sup>119</sup> Goffart proposed that a number of historical works should be seen as 'textual arguments' in which a largely imagined past was shaped by an author to answer present concerns. Turned towards missionary hagiography, the idea helped to demonstrate that the stories of the saints were often written with specific aims which went beyond the cult of saints, from the promotion of missionary activity to the defence of episcopal boundaries.

A final consideration must be how hagiographical discourses reached their audiences. Some of the different possibilities are illustrated by Alcuin of York in the dedication of the *Vita Willibrordi* to Beornrad in c. 796:

Tuis parui, pater sancta, praeceptis et duos digessi libellos, unum prosaico sermone gradientem, qui puplice fratribus in ecclesia [...] legi potuisset; alterum Piereo pede currentem, qui in secreto cubili inter scolasticos tuos tantummodo ruminare debuisset.<sup>120</sup>

Few other authors are quite so specific. The use of Latin may have restricted the accessibility of some texts to Latinate audiences, whether read or read out; but estimates as to the extent of Latin literacy vary and are complicated by the slow separation of Latin from some vernaculars.<sup>121</sup> It is also unclear whether priests made spot translations of some texts. Whatever the situation on the ground, two of our hagiographers — Willibald and Hygeburg — seem to have envisaged lay people in their audience, while a third — Liudger — clearly expected his work to be heard.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History, A.D. 550–800: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988). For reactions to Goffart's book, see *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by Scharer and Scheibelreiter. For a review of the debates *Narrators* has provoked, see its 2005 reprint with a new preface by Goffart.

<sup>120</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, pref.: 'I have obeyed your command and I have set down two books, one walking along in prose which can be read publicly by the brothers in church [...] the other, running with Pieria [the muse of poetry], your pupils can read over and over again privately in their rooms.'

<sup>121</sup> For a review of recent debates, see van Egmond, 'Audiences of Early Medieval Hagiographical Texts'. For a maximalist view, see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989).

<sup>122</sup> Willibald, *VB*, pref.; Hygeburg, *VWill*, pref.; Liudger, *VG*, c. 13. These three examples cast doubt on the significance of Katherine Heene's argument in 'Merovingian and Carolingian Hagiography: Continuity or Change in Public and Aims?', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 107 (1989), 415–28



Each text is to be taken on its own terms for what it may reveal about potential audiences.

### *Overview of the Sources*

It is often necessary to approach the *vitae* as interrelated groups rather than isolated entities, as von Padberg and Wood found. Only as situated textual arguments do hagiographies reveal the social and mental worlds which produced them and which people hoped to shape through discourse. Clusters of saints' Lives can be defined in many different ways, for example through shared manuscript traditions or provenance from a shared school. The following guide is intended as an introduction to the key points and does not reflect the only possible placing of the texts.

The first of the *vitae* to be written about the Anglo-Saxon 'missions' was the *Vita Bonifatii*, sometimes called the *Liber s. Bonifatii*. This work was written in Mainz by the Anglo-Saxon priest Willibald on the orders of Boniface's pupils and successors Lull of Mainz and Megingoz of Würzburg. A terminus post quem for the *vita* is provided by Megingoz's resignation from Würzburg in 769. The *Vita Bonifatii* was thus written within living memory of the saint for people who had known him, although Willibald himself admits that he had never met his subject.<sup>123</sup> The text should be considered alongside the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, written in Eichstätt in Bavaria.<sup>124</sup> The story of Willibald was originally written as a stand-alone work, but this plan was revised with the production of the complementary story of Wynnebald.<sup>125</sup> Judging by a cryptogram in the earliest manuscript of the two works, the text was written by the otherwise unknown nun Hygeburg of Heidenheim, who describes herself as a relative of her two subjects.<sup>126</sup> She also

(p. 416), where she argues that Carolingian hagiographies in Germany were not dedicated to lay people.

<sup>123</sup> On the dating of Willibald's *VB*, see Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 6–15; Klüppel, 'Die Germania', pp. 166–67. On Lull and the *Vita Bonifatii*, see Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull'.

<sup>124</sup> Note that this is not the same Willibald who wrote the *VB*: Willibald of Eichstätt was a bishop at the time of the *VB*'s composition (he had been since 741/42) while the author was only a priest.

<sup>125</sup> On Hygeburg's thoughts on the relationship between the texts, compare *VWill*, pref., to *VWyn*, pref.

<sup>126</sup> Bernhard Bischoff, 'Wer ist die Nonne von Heidenheim?', *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens*, 49 (1931), 387–97. The most recent work on Hygeburg — Pauline Head's 'Who Is the Nun from Heidenheim? A Study of Hyeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*',

seems to have written under the supervision of Willibald of Eichstätt, providing a terminus post quem of the Bishop's death in 787 for the completion of at least the initial composition.<sup>127</sup> Together, the *vitae* about Boniface, Wynnebald, and Willibald appear to have provided the core account of the missions and are preserved together in the earliest extant manuscript, likely from early ninth-century Eichstätt.<sup>128</sup> Hygeburg and the priest Willibald wrote in the same convoluted style, following the model of Aldhelm of Malmesbury, a fact which underlines the Southumbrian heritage of both hagiographers.<sup>129</sup> In the early tenth century the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* was preserved in the Mainz *Passionale sanctorum* alongside the *Passio minor Kiliani* (c. 800), which modelled St Kilian of Würzburg on Boniface, and the *Miracula Waldburgensis* (c. 895), which was written about the brothers' sister Waldburga.<sup>130</sup> These *vitae* can therefore be treated as a united group because of their themes, style, and the contexts in which they were preserved.

A second major school began at Tours with Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, written in c. 796.<sup>131</sup> This was, as we saw above, executed in both prose and poetic forms in order to facilitate both reading aloud at meal times and private study. Alcuin was following in the footsteps of his fellow Northumbrian Bede, whose *Vita Cuthberti* had also been composed in alternative forms.<sup>132</sup> It was Bede's famous *Historia*

*Medium Ævum*, 51 (2002), 29–46 — is factually incorrect and, in portraying Hygeburg as wilfully subverting female stereotypes, provides an unsatisfactory interpretation of her work.

<sup>127</sup> The work was partly dictated by Willibald (so Hygeburg claimed) in 778 and Levison provided no further date (Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, II, 178). On the likelihood of further work between 778 and 787, see Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 19; Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 168.

<sup>128</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 1086. See also a related tenth-century copy, Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, MS C73a. Two more ninth-century witnesses to the *VB* — Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 136 and St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 552 — indicate that an important early audience for the text was at the monastery of St Gall.

<sup>129</sup> Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, II, 177–78, in which Levison dismissed Willibald and Hygeburg's Latin as 'barbarisch'.

<sup>130</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 4585, an early tenth-century manuscript from Regensburg. On the dating of the *Passio Kiliani*, see Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Die Viten des hl. Kilian', in *Kilian – Mönch aus Irland, aller Franken Patron*, ed. by Johannes Erischen and Evamaria Brockhoff (Munich, 1989), pp. 287–97 (pp. 287–88).

<sup>131</sup> 796 is the date given by Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 115, and is plausible because it would coincide with Charlemagne's Saxon campaigns; Levison had been less certain, suggesting between 785 and 797 (Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, II, 172).

<sup>132</sup> Bede, *Vita Cuthberti*, prose version ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave, *Two Lives of St Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge, 1940),

*ecclesiastica* which supplied Alcuin with much of his information up to the death of Pippin II. Thiotfrid of Echternach claimed in the eleventh century that Alcuin had also worked with an earlier *Vita Willibrordi*, now lost, which had been written by an Irishman.<sup>133</sup> No trace of this text has survived, alas, but we can see that Alcuin's other two works of hagiography — the *Vita Vedasti* and *Vita Richarii* — were also new editions which used existing material to ideological effect.<sup>134</sup> It is often supposed that Alcuin was more autonomous in the execution of the *Vita Willibrordi*. In part, this is because both he and his addressee — Beornrad of Sens and Echternach — were related to their subject saint.<sup>135</sup> It also seems clear that Alcuin was keen to outline a missionary blueprint for Beornrad, who later left the Frankish heartlands to evangelize the Saxons.<sup>136</sup> The dissemination of the text is far from obvious outside this context. From the Carolingian period only one manuscript has survived, but it seems from other texts modelled on the work that Alcuin's work had a circulation to rival the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>137</sup>

The *Vita Willibrordi* had greatest influence on the hagiographical traditions of Frisia and Saxony, two regions united by interconnected nobilities, landholdings, and church organization.<sup>138</sup> It had a near-immediate influence on Liudger of

pp. 141–307, metrical version ed. by Werner Jaager, *Bedas Metrische Vita sancti Cuthberti*, Palaestra, 198 (Leipzig, 1935).

<sup>133</sup> Thiotfrid, *Vita Willibrordi*, ed. by Alain Poncelet, AASS, Nov. III (Brussels, 1910), c. 24: 'Nam primo quidam linguae et gentis Scottiae aggressus tanti viri gesta describere, rustico stilo detrivit dignitatem.' On Thiotfrid's work, see Jean Leclercq, 'Théofroi, témoin de la culture à Echternach et de la dévotion à s. Willibrord', in *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande*, ed. by Kiesel and Schroeder, pp. 194–99.

<sup>134</sup> Christiane Veyrard-Cosme, 'Alcuin et la réécriture hagiographique: d'un programme avoué d'*emendatio* à son actualisation', in *La réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. by Goulet and Heinzmann, pp. 71–86.

<sup>135</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, pref.; Thiotfrid, *Vita Willibrordi*, c. 29.

<sup>136</sup> *Vita Liudgeri secunda*, ed. by Wilhelm Diekamp, *Die Vitae Sancti Liudgeri*, Die Geschichtsquellen des Bistums Münster (Münster, 1881), I. 17.

<sup>137</sup> Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, MS XIV 1: see Wilhelm Levison, 'Conspicuum codicum hagiographorum', in MGH SRM, 7 (Hannover, 1920), pp. 529–706 (p. 682).

<sup>138</sup> See for example Ian Wood, 'Before or After Mission: Social Relations Across the Middle and Lower Rhine in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', in *The Long Eighth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. by Inge Lyde Hansen and Chris Wickham, TRW, 11 (Leiden, 2000), pp. 149–66, and Wolfert S. van Egmond, 'Converting Monks: Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Frisia and Saxony', in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, ed. by Guyda Armstrong and Ian Wood, International Medieval Research, 7 (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 37–45.

Münster, one of Alcuin's former pupils from York, who was inspired to write a *Vita Gregorii* as a hagiographical sermon based around his memories of Abbot Gregory of Utrecht and Gregory's teacher Boniface.<sup>139</sup> Liudger's intentions in writing were not so different to Alcuin's, and his text has justifiably been seen as both a displaced meditation on mission and as a critique of the standards of his age.<sup>140</sup> In turn Altfred, another Bishop of Münster (839–49) and a relative of Liudger's, modelled stories of Liudger's life on those he had read in the *Vita Willibrordi* as well as supplying rich and distinctive stories of his own.<sup>141</sup> Altfred's book was reworked twice in ninth-century Werden to bring different missionary and monastic ideals to the fore, suggesting a lively series of debates about the lessons Liudger's story offered.<sup>142</sup> The original *vita* also provided the inspiration for the *Vita antiqua Lebuini*, about the Anglo-Saxon Liefwine (d. c. 775) who worked with Gregory and whose cult Liudger established.<sup>143</sup> At roughly the same time as Altfred was writing, the *Vita Willehadi* was composed in Bremen about the Northumbrian Willehad, the first bishop of that city; that work too owed much to the model set down in the *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>144</sup> The story of Willehad formed the first part of the Hamburg-Bremen tradition which was expanded in the ninth-century by Anskar's *Miracula Willehadi* (860), Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* (c. 870), and the anonymous *Vita Rimberti* (c. 900).<sup>145</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 111–12, argues for Alcuin's influence on Liudger's *VG* and consequently a date of c. 800, pushing back the standard dating of c. 790 given in Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 41, and Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 171.

<sup>140</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 111–12; Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker'.

<sup>141</sup> For agreement on the 839–49 dating of Altfred's *VLger*, see Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, VI, 824; Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 51; Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 172.

<sup>142</sup> Karl Hauck, 'Ein Utrechter Missionar auf der ältsächsischen Stammesversammlung', in *Das erste Jahrtausend: Kultur und Kunst im werdenden Abendland an Rhein und Ruhr*, vol. II, ed. by Viktor H. Elbern (Düsseldorf, 1964), pp. 734–45; Eberhard Kaus, 'Zu den Liudger-Viten des 9. Jahrhunderts', *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, 142 (1992), 9–55.

<sup>143</sup> Hauck, 'Ein Utrechter Missionar', p. 740; Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 117–19.

<sup>144</sup> The *VWhad* is traditionally seen as a work from Bremen: see recently Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, VI, 838, and Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 198. For the thesis that it came from Echternach, see Niemeyer, 'Die Herkunft der *Vita Willehadi*'.

<sup>145</sup> The *VWhad*, *Miracula Willehadi*, *Vita Anskarii*, and *Vita Rimberti* are preserved together in the earliest extant manuscript to contain the *VWhad*, the twelfth-century Münster, Staatsarchiv, MS I B 228: see Alain Poncelet, *AASS*, Nov. III, pp. 839–40. Another extant twelfth-century manuscript — Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 9738 (Levison, 'Conspectus codicum

The Alcuinian hagiographical tradition was also developed at the monastery of Ferrières, between Orléans and Sens, where Alcuin had been abbot. He was commemorated in *c.* 840 by an anonymous *Vita Alcuini*, written in the model of his own *vitae*.<sup>146</sup> Also from Ferrières at this time — although possibly begun at Fulda — came Lupus's *Vita Wigberti*, written in 836 at the request of Abbot Bun of Hersfeld.<sup>147</sup> Lupus is one of the most celebrated Latinists of the Carolingian Renaissance because of his clear, classical style, which developed reforms set out by Alcuin. Such was his debt to the former Abbot of Ferrières's ideas that Lupus even began his *Vita Wigberti* with a quotation from Alcuin's *Vita Richarii*. The work is lacking in anything that could be considered historical fact, as Lupus himself admits, but the work nonetheless is interesting for intersecting Alcuinian traditions and Fulda traditions in the ninth century.

The monastery of Fulda, Boniface's principal foundation, provides its own distinct traditions about the Anglo-Saxons on the continent. These traditions began when Abbot Eigil (d. 822) wrote the *Vita Sturm*i about the first Abbot of Fulda, Sturm. Although Sturm was a Bavarian, he was celebrated as an integral part of Boniface's *collegium*, and the *Vita* is the best witness to Fulda's hagiographical take on their Anglo-Saxon heritage. The work is now dated to the 810s, a time when Eigil was attempting to restore order at Fulda after many turbulent years.<sup>148</sup> Eigil was later commemorated in the *Vita Ægil* by Brun Candidus at the request of

hagiographorum', p. 644) — was written in Echternach but only contains the texts about Willehad. On the *vitae*, see Wood, 'Christians and Pagans'; Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*'.

<sup>146</sup> Little has been written on the *Vita Alcuini* except Bullough, *Alcuin*, pp. 24–34, in which the work is also linked to Anglo-Saxon *vitae* such as the early eighth-century *Vita Wilfridi* by Stephanus.

<sup>147</sup> Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 182. Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 174, suggests Lupus had returned to Ferrières by the time he came to write the work. Lupus's letters provide another important collection from the Carolingian period: see Lupus, *Epistolae*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Epp., 6 (Berlin, 1925), pp. 1–126. On Lupus, see Thomas F. X. Noble, 'Lupus of Ferrières in his Carolingian Context', in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. by Alexander C. Murray (Toronto, 1998), pp. 232–50.

<sup>148</sup> On the dating of Eigil's *VS*, see now Kehl, 'Die Entstehungszeit der *Vita Sturm*i des Eigil', and Janneke Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space: History and Identity at the Monastery of Fulda (744–856)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2003), pp. 68–72. The *VS* had been dated to *c.* 796: see Eigil, *Vita Sturm*i, ed. by Pius Engelbert, *Die Vita Sturm*i des Eigil von Fulda: Literarkritisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 29 (Marburg, 1968), pp. 18–20. Heinz Löwe also suggested 794 in Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, VI, 694.

Abbot Hrabanus Maurus of Fulda between 839 and 842.<sup>149</sup> Although Hrabanus was another former pupil of Alcuin's, Brun's work shows little influence of Alcuinian hagiographical traditions and instead used ideals about the Benedictine life and Eigil's own work as a model.<sup>150</sup> Also under Hrabanus, Rudolf of Fulda wrote a *Vita Leobae* about Leoba, Boniface's kinswoman and first Abbess of Tauberbischofsheim near Würzburg. Rudolf noted that the priest Mago, one of his informants, had died five years before he wrote the *vita*; other sources indicate Mago died in 831, giving us a date of 836 for the text, shortly before the translation of Leoba's relics from Fulda to the nearby St Peter's Mount in 838.<sup>151</sup> It is curious to note, however, that while the three texts appear to provide a refined identity for the Fulda monks and their related communities, no single extant manuscript contains the three *vitae* together.<sup>152</sup> They were, however, composed around the same time, illustrate similar ideals, and have common literary influences such as the *Vita Bonifatii*.

Various other *vitae* are less readily connected to any particular school. Potentially the earliest of these texts is the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. According to the oldest surviving manuscript — the fourteenth-century Gotha, Landesbibliothek, MSI 64 — the work was written by Radbod of Utrecht, but it seems more likely that he only edited the introduction and conclusion, given much of the style and content.<sup>153</sup> There is general agreement that on internal evidence the core of the work was written in Utrecht and dates from before the 840s because it makes little of the Vikings who raided Frisia from that time onwards.<sup>154</sup> In 1929 Jan Romein suggested that the author was Bishop Fredericus I of Utrecht (d. 825), but few have found the idea entirely compelling.<sup>155</sup> The work might represent later versions of

<sup>149</sup> Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, VI, 696.

<sup>150</sup> Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, VI, 697; Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus'.

<sup>151</sup> Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, VI, 709; Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 260–61; Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space', pp. 167–201.

<sup>152</sup> Eigil's *VS* and Rudolf's *VL* are attested together in the twelfth-century Erlangen-Nürnberg, Codex Erlangensis, MS 321 (Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', p. 586), the oldest surviving copy of either text.

<sup>153</sup> Carasso-Kok, 'Le diocèse d'Utrecht', pp. 385–86. For the case against Radbod's authorship, see Levison in MGH SRG, 57, pp. xlviii–liv, and Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 102–04.

<sup>154</sup> *VaB*, c. 6; Levison in MGH SRG, 57, pp. xlviii–liv; Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 14; Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 167; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 103.

<sup>155</sup> Jan Romein, 'Wie is de "Presbyter Ultrajectensis"?', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 44 (1929), 373–81. For sympathetic receptions of the argument, but with reservations about Fredericus



traditions that predate Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*, yet this, too, is uncertain.<sup>156</sup> Another mystery is provided by the anonymous *Vita antiquior Burchardi*, which is so short and blatantly inaccurate that it has received little scholarly interest. The most recent editor of the text has argued that it comes from Würzburg in the 970s or 980s; it may be based upon an earlier work that is now lost.<sup>157</sup> The *Vita antiquior Burchardi* was preserved in tenth-century St Gall alongside Ermenrich of Passau's *Sermo Sualonis* (c. 840), which is itself interesting because Ermenrich had connections to both Fulda and St Gall.<sup>158</sup> These are all works from the peripheries of Anglo-Saxon continental activities and appear to lack the strong connection to a particular school that characterizes most *vitae* about the Anglo-Saxons.

Alongside the saints' Lives, much of our direct evidence for the missions comes from collections of letters. Three such collections of the Bonifatian correspondence have survived from eighth- and ninth-century Germany, while a now-lost English collection is evident from the work of William of Malmesbury.<sup>159</sup> To these can be added the numerous collections of letters associated with Alcuin — some compiled by the author himself — which together attest to nearly three hundred letters.<sup>160</sup> Alas no letters of Willibrord's, if he wrote any, have survived. Finding rhyme and reason in letter collections can prove difficult, and it is clear different

specifically, see Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, VI, 919; Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 16; Carasso-Kok, 'Le diocèse d'Utrecht', p. 386.

<sup>156</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 106.

<sup>157</sup> Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 173. See the introduction to the new edition, *Vita antiquior Burchardi*, ed. by Desirée Barlava, MGH SRG, 76 (Hannover, 2005), pp. 19–49. Before Barlava the text was thought to be connected to either Hunbert or Gauzbert of Würzburg, on whom see Alfred Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg*, vol. I: *Die Bischofsreihe bis 1254*, Germania Sacra neue folge I. Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz (Berlin, 1962), pp. 39–46. There is no manuscript earlier than the tenth-century Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 84 from Reichenau, in which it follows the *Passio Kiliani*.

<sup>158</sup> Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 182; Coon, 'Historical Fact and Exegetical Fiction'. The *SS* is preserved alongside the *VBurch* in St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 571, a later tenth-century manuscript mistakenly described in the earlier edition of Holder-Egger, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), p. 46, as ninth-century.

<sup>159</sup> *Die Briefe*, ed. by Tangl, p. xxxi. For the example of the transmission of Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 73 in Britain, see Timothy Reuter, "Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik" im Zeitalter Karl Martells: Begriffe und Wirklichkeit', in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 35–59 (pp. 51–59).

<sup>160</sup> Bullough, *Alcuin*, pp. 35–110.

manuscripts had different purposes.<sup>161</sup> Some appear to have served as exemplars judging by the number which have had the addressee's name replaced by the letter N. Others may have been compiled to celebrate the principal (saintly) author, or else simply reflect bureaucratic interests. There are problems, however, when examining the effect of letter collections on posterity. Letters underpinned many writers' understandings of iconic figures such as Gregory the Great. For the hagiographers of Bonifaces and Alcuins, however, it seems that knowledge of the letters did not impede on the shaping of a good story (although later hagiographers such as Otloh in the eleventh century included some letters in full).<sup>162</sup> The set-piece stories of, for example, the *Vita Bonifatii*, like the felling of the Oak of Geismar, are nowhere even alluded to in the epistolary evidence. But it is also obvious that letter-writers could be every bit as tactical as historians in attempting to influence their audiences.<sup>163</sup> There is a need to treat the letters on a similar footing as their historical or hagiographical cousins.

If saints' Lives and letter collections provide the most enduring images of the saints, it is important not to lose sight of the value of other kinds of material. In this present study the evidence of charters will be invaluable for providing detailed information about the social networks in which the missionaries moved and the geographical scope of the resources they controlled.<sup>164</sup> Charters and privileges can also reflect much about the role of monasteries (or *Klosterpolitik*) in the ambitions of Carolingians and other families or factions.<sup>165</sup> Even such legalistic evidence, it

<sup>161</sup> Mary Garrison, "'Send More Socks': On Mentality and the Preservation Context of Medieval Letters", in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. by Mostert, pp. 69–99; Andrew Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface', *ASE*, 30 (2001), 15–38.

<sup>162</sup> Otloh, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG, 57 (Hannover, 1905), pp. 111–217, on which see Karl F. Morrison, 'The Structure of Holiness in Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii* and Ebo's *Vita Ottonis*', in *Law, Church, and Society: Essays in Honour of Stephan Kuttner*, ed. by Kenneth Pennington and Robert Somerville (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 131–56.

<sup>163</sup> Marco Mostert, 'Bonifatius als geschiedvervalser', *Madoc: Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen*, 9 (1995), 213–21.

<sup>164</sup> On the Middle Rhine, see Franz Staab, *Untersuchungen zur Gesellschaft am Mittelrhein in der Karolingerzeit*, Geschichtliche Landeskunde, 11 (Wiesbaden, 1975); Innes, *State and Society*. On the Carolingian heartlands and Franconia, see Matthias Werner, *Der Lütticher Raum in frühkarolingischer Zeit: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte einer karolingischen Stammlandschaft*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 62 (Göttingen, 1980); Werner, *Adelsfamilien im Umkreis der frühen Karolinger*.

<sup>165</sup> Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*.



should be remembered, is subjective, structured, and susceptible to imaginative forgery.<sup>166</sup> There is a wealth of sources for the spiritual and intellectual horizons of some key figures. Alcuin is perhaps best attested in his numerous exegetical and poetic works, although it will remain outside the scope of this study to consider them in any depth. Other writings of Boniface which circulated on the continent include treatises on grammar and metre, and most popularly a collection of Aldhelmian riddles on virtues and vices.<sup>167</sup> A collection of eighteen sermons has also been associated with his circle, but it is impossible to treat these as anything other than later Carolingian compositions.<sup>168</sup> Surviving manuscripts from the period can indicate a variety of things from the kind of penitentials used to the incorporation of saints in the liturgical cycles of different churches.<sup>169</sup> These sources remain important for establishing the interests and connections of the Anglo-Saxons and their followers, and create some revealing counterpoints to the evidence of the letters and *vitae*.

### *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World*

This study reassesses the importance of the Anglo-Saxon ‘missions’ to the Frankish kingdoms through an exploration of the relationship between efforts to shape the religious life and hagiographical reinterpretations of those efforts. Throughout it will be necessary to study the ways in which definitions of sanctity were affected by the intersections of politics, culture, and notions of sacred spaces and time.

<sup>166</sup> Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, pp. 81–114; Sarah Foot, ‘Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record or Story?’, in *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Rossano Balzaretti and Elizabeth Tyler, SEM, 16 (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 39–65.

<sup>167</sup> Boniface, *Ars grammatica*, ed. by Georg J. Gebauer and Bengt Löfstedt, CCSL, 133B (Turnhout, 1980); Boniface, *Ars metrica*, ed. by Bengt Löfstedt, CCSL, 133B; Boniface, *Ænigmata*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Poetae, 1 (Berlin, 1895).

<sup>168</sup> Pseudo-Boniface, *Sermones*, PL, 89. Rob Meens has talked on this subject at conferences but not yet published on it. Some of his views are discussed in von Padberg, *Inszenierung*, pp. 195–202.

<sup>169</sup> Rob Meens, ‘Willibrords Boeteboek?’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 106 (1993), 163–78. Yitzhak Hen, ‘The Liturgy of St Willibrord’, *ASE*, 26 (1997), 41–62; Lutz E. von Padberg, ‘Bonifatius und die Bücher’, in *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des hl. Bonifatius*, ed. by Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork (Fulda, 1994), pp. 7–75; Rosamond McKitterick, ‘Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Reflections on the Manuscript Evidence’, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 9 (1989), 291–329, repr. in her *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, 6th–9th Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994), IV.

Fundamental questions will also be asked about what a 'saint' was, and why in particular the Anglo-Saxon missions provided so many examples later communities wanted to commemorate through the imaginative stories of medieval hagiography. The study nominally proceeds outwards from the origins of the 'missions' in Britain to a pilgrimage to Byzantium and the Holy Land. There is no strict chronological progression because it is essential at every stage to understand the relationship between the 'missions' and interpretations of them, whether the interpretation is by the Anglo-Saxons themselves or by hagiographers over a century later.

Chapter 1 concerns the motivations behind the 'missions'. The traditional rationale modern historians provide, following Bede, is that pious individuals travelled abroad in order to evangelize Germanic peoples with whom they perceived an affinity, inspired by ideals of *peregrinatio*. This needs to be re-examined to consider whether this two-fold explanation can actually be attributed to any individuals after Ecgbert and to what extent later writers recognized or reinterpreted any motivations. What role does the proclamation or attribution of intention play in the conceptualization of pious deeds and saint-creation? Chapter 2 studies the relationships between the missionaries and various factions in and around the Frankish world. The Pippinids/Carolingians dominated the political scene during the eighth and ninth centuries, making them essential to any interpretation of the politics of the 'missions'. At the same time, activities which took Anglo-Saxons to places like Frisia, Thuringia, and Bavaria — namely, places which were not always under Frankish overlordship — brought both conflict and alliances with rival power structures. It was partly because of the power derived from these social environments that Anglo-Saxons were able to establish new churches and monasteries.

Chapters 3 and 4 explore the ways in which the work of the missionaries and the hagiographers reimagined the cultural and spiritual topography of the North. The third chapter analyses attitudes towards paganism in the epistolary, council, and hagiographical records. Paganisms were more than rival religions: as belief structures and practices defined by Christians themselves as 'pagan', they help to reveal through negation certain aspects of the *Weltbild* which drove the 'missions' forward. In what ways then did representations of paganism define the purpose and significance of the Anglo-Saxons' work? The chapter which follows investigates the ways in which the foundations associated with mission were created and, more importantly, how they came to be conceptualized through hagiographical legend. The image of the untamed wilderness is commonplace in Christian literature and thought, but each instance of it needs to be read in context. It will also be necessary to analyse the plans for episcopal authority developed by the missions, particularly

at Mainz, Würzburg, and Utrecht where new administrative organization and the cult of saints developed in tandem.

The next two chapters examine the Anglo-Saxons' famed promotion of Benedictine monasticism and papal authority. Developing the theme of imagined spiritual landscapes from Chapters 3 and 4, Chapter 5 asks how changing representations of monastic rules and saintly discipline simultaneously shaped the reputation of the 'missions' and the horizons of the communities who used them. Chapter 6 similarly analyses representations of Rome in Merovingian *vitae*, Bonifatian hagiography, Carolingian propaganda, and finally *vitae* from Frisia, Bavaria, and central Germany in the ninth century to see if there are tangible changes over time. What role, if any, did sources of monastic and papal authority play in the *vitae* to support later claims that individuals were saints? Are hagiographical stories about saints seeking such authority simple reflections of past realities, or do they reflect something deeper about the perceived nature of sanctity in the wake of veneration for Boniface and associated saints?

Finally, Chapter 7 goes beyond the traditional horizons for studies of the 'missions'. Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi* tells a story following Willibald from Wessex to Italy, then on to Jerusalem and the Holy Land on pilgrimage, before proceeding to Bavaria after further years spent in Greece and Italy again. What function might such a story have performed for its audience in Eichstätt if *historia* rarely preserved the past for posterity? Why, in particular, was so much care taken to describe the locations of the holy places? Comparison here will be made with near-contemporary works which discuss pilgrimage to the Holy Land, such as Adomnán of Iona's late seventh-century *De locis sanctis*. Analysis of the text will also lead into a consideration of how the circles of Boniface and his successors responded to developments in Byzantium and the Arab world. It is in the mediation between the local and the universal in Christendom that the Anglo-Saxons often had the greatest significance.



## MOTIVATIONS

The reasons why so many Anglo-Saxons left Britain to live a religious life on the continent were many and varied. People set out from Northumbria, Wessex, Mercia, and Ireland, not as part of a common ‘enterprise’, but sharing common ideals.<sup>1</sup> The two most common influences were the ideal of *peregrinatio* (pilgrimage) and the Anglo-Saxon desire to evangelize the still-pagan Germanic peoples who lived beyond the Franks.<sup>2</sup> Both these elements are present in Bede’s account of his friend Ecgberht, who began the missions:

Quarum in Germania plurimus nouerat esse nationes, a quibus Angli uel Saxones, qui nunc Britanniam incolunt, genus et originem duxisse noscuntur; unde hactenus a uicina gente Brittonum corrupte Garmani nuncupantur. Sunt autem Fresones, Rugini, Danai, Hunni, Antiqui Saxones, Borucuari. Sunt alii per plures hisdem in partibus populi paganis adhuc ritibus seruantes, ad quos venire praefatus Christi miles [...] disposuit [...]; uel, si hoc fieri non posset, Romam uenire ad uidenda atque adoranda beatorum apostolorum ac martyrum Christi limina cogitauit.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> McKitterick, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>2</sup> This two-fold explanation has frequently been cited in literature that covers the Anglo-Saxon missions. Some prominent examples include the following: Crawford, *Anglo-Saxon Influence*, pp. 35–36; Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, II, 690; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 144; von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 61–68. The classic studies of the early medieval phenomenon of *peregrinatio* are Kathleen Hughes, ‘The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 11 (1960), 143–51; Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini*; Friedrich Prinz, ‘Peregrinatio, Mönchtum und Mission’, in *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters*, ed. by Knut Schäferdiek, *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, 2 (Munich, 1978), I, 445–65.

<sup>3</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 9: ‘He knew that there were many peoples living in Germany from whom the Angles and Saxons, who now live in Britain, derived their origin; hence even to this day they are by a corruption called *Garmani* by their neighbours the Britons. Now these people are the Frisians, Rugians, Danes, Huns, Old Saxons, and Boructuars. There are also many others in the same

For Bede's Ecgberht, mission and pilgrimage were thus complementary practices, inspired by the apostolic decree: 'go ye, therefore, and preach unto all nations unto the ends of the earth' (Matt. 28. 19).<sup>4</sup> Ecgberht was, however, just one figure in a complex century-long movement, and his missionary motives are only part of the web of beliefs and thoughts involved in early medieval thinking on the missions.

Letters and historical writings can provide contrasting reasons for the journeys to the continent. One must not be too quick to take these all at face value or to be too reductionist about the behaviour they purport to describe. Most of our sources are literary artefacts shaped by tropes and ideologies rather than any strict correlation between the subject's mental states and activities.<sup>5</sup> Even the personal letters are often constructed around particular literary styles, word games, or even secret codes; and all contain unwritten layers of communication through the messengers who carried them.<sup>6</sup> If one ignored for a moment the problems of the written word, one still has to face the problems of interpreting other people's actions — something which to work needs high levels of rationality on behalf of the actor.<sup>7</sup> The centrality of ritual in medieval religious and secular activity attests to the relevancy of rule-driven standards of behaviour.<sup>8</sup> Each instance, however, is new and carries with it its own semantic range relative to the occasion. No one should expect a missionary setting out from Ireland in the 690s to be anything like one setting out from Northumbria a century later; moreover, later descriptions may distort or lessen any differences because of their detachment from the events they describe. With that in mind, this chapter will provide sketches of how clusters of motivations — missionary, ascetic, and social — were asserted or interpreted in different situations.

regions who still practice pagan rites, to whom the soldier of Christ proposed to go [...]. But if he could not do this, he intended to go to Rome, there to visit and worship at the shrines of the blessed apostles and martyrs of Christ.'

<sup>4</sup> Von Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 28–32.

<sup>5</sup> And that is before one even runs the risk of accidentally imposing modern assumptions on the evidence: Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1973).

<sup>6</sup> Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources'; Paul Edward Dutton, *Charlemagne's Mustache and other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age* (London, 2004), pp. 129–50.

<sup>7</sup> For a handy, if optimistic, note on behaviourism and history, see Bevir, *Logic of the History of Ideas*, pp. 118–21.

<sup>8</sup> Gerd Althoff, *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter: Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde* (Darmstadt, 1997).

### *The Missionary Background*

The Anglo-Saxons' interest in missionary activity evolved out of their conversion at the hands of Roman and Irish missions in the sixth and seventh centuries. Christianity is a universal mission, as the apostolic decree shows. In the Roman Empire, however, it was only slowly that any sense developed that such universality might necessitate mission to the uncivilized peoples beyond the *limes*.<sup>9</sup> After the adoption of the religion by Emperor Constantine in 312, some Christians such as Eusebius of Caesarea equated the Roman Empire with God's kingdom on Earth, making the peoples outside the empire less important.<sup>10</sup> Even when barbarian groups crossed into the empire and converted, churchmen were often more concerned with heresies than paganisms.<sup>11</sup> In the post-imperial world, the theology of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) developed a powerful new theology and in particular the idea of 'diversity within unity': many different voices brought together in a single faith.<sup>12</sup> Few inherited the full strength of Gregory's views more than the Anglo-Saxons since it was he who had sent missionaries to convert them in 596.<sup>13</sup>

The origins of Irish evangelism were quite different. As Christians the Irish still believed in the Universal Church, but as their Christianity developed outside the frontiers of the Roman Empire it developed its own character.<sup>14</sup> Ireland's own introduction to Christianity is largely unknown apart from a continental reference to Palladius being sent to be the first bishop in 431.<sup>15</sup> More famous but also more difficult to place is the work of St Patrick, a Briton who in the early fifth century

<sup>9</sup> Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio'.

<sup>10</sup> F. Edward Cranz, 'De civitate Dei XV. 2 and Augustine's Idea of Christian Society', *Speculum*, 25 (1950), 215–25 (pp. 220–21).

<sup>11</sup> Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei*, ed. by F. Pauly, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 8 (Vienna, 1883), V. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Meyvaert, 'Diversity within Unity: A Gregorian Theme', *Heythrop Journal*, 4 (1963), 141–62; Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 72–75.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 272. On the mission, see Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*; Ian Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English', *Speculum*, 69 (1994), 1–17. On its aftermath, see James Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity in England', in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1986), pp. 49–67; Angenendt, 'Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons'.

<sup>14</sup> Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London, 1966) is still worthy of study. See also now Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> On the problems of the early Irish Church, see Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, pp. 78–96.

returned to Ireland to preach the word of God having previously spent much of his youth in the region as a captive. Patrick's great innovation was to take the command to preach unto the ends of the Earth literally, helping to inspire an Irish Christian culture which took to heart the idea of mobile preaching and pastoral care.<sup>16</sup> Two of the most extreme examples of this are St Columba, whose travels saw him help to convert the Picts in Scotland, and St Columbanus, whose extensive peregrinations included missionary work as far east as Bregenz by Lake Constance.<sup>17</sup> It was this kind of spirit which took some Irish priests among the Anglo-Saxons; but politics also played its part. The great Northumbrian kings Oswald and Oswiu had grown up in exile with many of their nobles amongst the *Picti vel Scotti*.<sup>18</sup> After King Edwin's death in 633, they returned to their homeland as Irish-taught Christians and used priests such as Aidan from Iona to help promote Christianity in their kingdom.<sup>19</sup> With Northumbrian kings able to exert power far to the north, and with saints like Columba and Patrick part of early Northumbrian calendars, Ireland and Northumbria formed parts of the same world in the seventh century.

Tensions emerged from clashes between Irish and Roman practices. On the continent, Columbanus had to write to Gregory the Great for support in Burgundy, where the variant Irish reckoning of Easter was causing problems with the Roman rites of the locals.<sup>20</sup> Gregory's English mission faced similar cultural problems. Success came quickly: Archbishop Augustine of Canterbury and Archbishop Paulinus of York — two monks sent by Gregory to Britain — played crucial roles in the early conversions of King Æthelberht of Kent (d. 616) and King Edwin of Northumbria, and Canterbury was quickly established as the institutional centre of the Anglo-Saxon Church, from which it maintained strong ties with the

<sup>16</sup> Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, p. 86; Claire Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion: Some Comparisons Between the Roman Mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 14 (1980), 59–94.

<sup>17</sup> Columba: Bede, *HE*, III. 4; Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, ed. and trans. by Alan O. Anderson and Marjorie O. Anderson (Oxford, 1991); Sally Foster, *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (London, 1996), pp. 87–88. Columbanus: Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRG, 37 (Hannover, 1905), I. 27; Friedrich Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish Nobility and the Territories East of the Rhine', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. by Clarke and Brennan, pp. 73–87 (pp. 80–81).

<sup>18</sup> Bede, *HE*, III. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Bede, *HE*, III. 2–3. See Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, I. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Columbanus, *Epistolae*, ed. by G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 2 (Dublin, 1970), no. 1.



papacy.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, however, Irish monks from the monastery of Iona, off the west coast of Scotland, were also engaged in missionary work in Northumbria, bringing with them different approaches to mission, monasticism, and learning.<sup>22</sup> Again, divergent calculations of the date of Easter proved the greatest tensions between Anglo-Saxons following Irish or Roman practices; this resulted in the Synod of Whitby in 664 at which King Oswiu, with echoes of Constantine at Nicaea in 325, ruled in favour of the Romanists.<sup>23</sup> The dispute over Easter was symptomatic of wider problems. Wilfrid, one of the leading Romanists at Whitby and a future Archbishop of York, had grown weary of Irish monasticism as a boy at Lindisfarne and, after further education in Rome itself, had returned to Northumbria to promote new liturgical chants and the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>24</sup> But on account of their libraries and the asceticism of their saints, the Irish maintained a strong influence on areas of Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>25</sup>

The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons proceeded only slowly and disjointedly away from debates such as Whitby. Kent had had its first Christian ruler in Æthelberht soon after 597, followed by East Anglia in c. 604 (King Rædwald), Northumbria in c. 627 (King Edwin), and Wessex in 635 (King Cynegils), with the middle kingdoms and Sussex only eventually following suit in the second half of the century. In few cases was conversion straightforward or irreversible. After King Rædwald of East Anglia's conversion, he was said to have continued to keep a pagan altar and his son apostatized shortly afterwards.<sup>26</sup> King Cædwalla of Wessex, the last convert king, renounced his pagan faith in 688, over fifty years after King

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597–1066* (Leicester, 1984).

<sup>22</sup> James Campbell, 'The Debt of the Early English Church to Ireland', in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. by Ní Chatháin and Richter, pp. 332–46.

<sup>23</sup> Bede, *HE*, II. 15. On Whitby, see Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, pp. 102–13 (on faulty evidence but still with important points about the politics); Faith Wallis, *Bede's The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool, 1999), pp. xviii–lxiii; Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish*, Jarrow Lecture (2003). The Irish 84(14) cycle is reconstructed by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and Daniel McCarthy, 'The "Lost" 84-Year Easter Table Rediscovered', *Peritia*, 6–7 (1987–88), 227–42.

<sup>24</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*; Bede, *HE*. There are significant discrepancies between Stephanus and Bede — see Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 258–96 — but they both broadly agree that Wilfrid spearheaded a movement to introduce more Roman practices.

<sup>25</sup> See for example the comments of Bede on Aidan: Bede, *HE*, III. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Bede, *HE*, II. 15.

Cynegils had first done so.<sup>27</sup> Christianity still developed only slowly away from the cities and courts; as late as 734, the Venerable Bede wrote to his friend Archbishop Egberht of York with concerns that the provision for pastoral care in some areas of his diocese was not sufficient and religion could be lost.<sup>28</sup> The creation of order was a slow process, fraught with practical difficulties and ideological controversies. Mission to the continent thus sprang from a background in which the battle for souls and the organization of Christianity were still live issues.

### *Mission and Identity*

The enduring early formulation of Anglo-Saxon identity, and by extension of their missionary targets, was set down by Bede in 731. But despite — or even following — James Campbell's assertion that '[Bede] does not generally write carelessly', we must be careful to unpick what role identity had in representations of mission.<sup>29</sup> The Anglo-Saxon missions to the continent appeared in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* almost as an extension of the conversion of the *Angli* in Britain.<sup>30</sup> Early in the story, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes had arrived from the northern regions of Europe; with Egberht and Willibrord planning returns to the continent, Bede's narrative had almost completed an epic cycle, charting the salvation of the English in time and geographical space.<sup>31</sup> Using Bede as a guide to perceptions of ethnic identity is, however, a difficult task. He was a patriotic Northumbrian actively engaged in conceptualizing a united English identity, if not creating it, through a biblically inspired account of the past.<sup>32</sup> Related but probably subtly different

<sup>27</sup> Bede, *HE*, III. 7, and Æthelweard, *Chronicon*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (London, 1962), II. 10.

<sup>28</sup> Bede, *Epistola ad Egberhtum*, ed. by Charles Plummer, *Beda Opera Historica*, vol. II (Oxford, 1896), esp. c. 11. On Bede's concern for reform in the letter, see Scott DeGregorio, "Nostrorum socordiam temporum": The Reforming Impulse of Bede's Later Exegesis', *EME*, 11 (2002), 107–22.

<sup>29</sup> James Campbell, Eric John, and Patrick Wormald, *The Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1982), p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1988), p. 181.

<sup>31</sup> The two key passages are Bede, *HE*, I. 15 and V. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas*, and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in *Ideals and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to John Michael Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough, and Roger Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 99–129; Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 251–58; A. H. Merrills, *Geography and History in Late Antiquity*, CSMLT, 4th Series, 64 (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 229–49.

models of Christian English identity were disseminated by Canterbury.<sup>33</sup> Distinctions in language, dress, custom, and tradition also played their roles in establishing localized identities.<sup>34</sup> To say that the Anglo-Saxons ‘perceived themselves’ to be related to groups on the continent makes a large number of assumptions about the relationship between heterogeneous communities and their perceptions of homogeneity. It may have been through a ‘corruption’ that the Britons called these groups the *Garmani*, but nonetheless Bede seems to imply a sense of a meta-German identity.

‘Germanic’ is one of those slippery terms to which it is increasingly difficult to give any stable meaning.<sup>35</sup> What it must not imply to modern readers is an identity based on blood, unbroken descent, or any other stable designator which happily united a single group over thousands of years at a stretch.<sup>36</sup> As Patrick Geary argued, ‘the Germanic world was perhaps the greatest and most enduring creation of Roman political and military genius’, not the product of blood.<sup>37</sup> It was a byproduct of Roman perceptions of cultural differences with their neighbours, which groups

<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Brooks, ‘Canterbury, Rome, and the Creation of English Identity’, in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, ed. by Julia M. H. Smith (Leiden, 2000), pp. 221–46.

<sup>34</sup> See in general Walter Pohl, ‘Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity’, in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, TRW, 2 (Leiden, 1998), pp. 17–69. On some of the material and linguistic differences amongst early Anglo-Saxon groups, see John Hines, ‘Philology, Archaeology and the *adventus Saxonum vel Anglorum*’, in *Britain 400–600: Language and History*, ed. by Alfred Bammesberger and Alfred Wollman (Heidelberg, 1990), pp. 17–36. On layers of identity, see Alex Woolf, ‘Community, Identity and Kingship in Early England’, in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. by William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (Leicester, 2000), pp. 91–109.

<sup>35</sup> For a recent overview of problems and possibilities, see Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 57 (Munich, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> See generally Walter Goffart’s collected essays, *Rome’s Fall and After* (London, 1989) and more recently Walter Goffart, ‘Does the Distant Past Impinge on the Invasion Age Germans?’, in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Andrew Gillett, SEM, 4 (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 21–37. Goffart singles out Herwig Wolfram, ‘*Origo et religio*: Ethnic Traditions and Literature in Early Medieval Texts’, *EME*, 3 (1994), 19–38, as a prime offender here, with Walter Pohl and Patrick Geary also coming in for criticism for related assumptions and theories. For a spirited response, see Walter Pohl, ‘Ethnicity, Theory, and Tradition: A Response’, in *On Barbarian Identity*, ed. by Gillett, pp. 221–39.

<sup>37</sup> Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford, 1988), p. iv.

beyond the Rhine came to adopt.<sup>38</sup> The early *Germani* were most enduringly described in the *Germania* of Tacitus (AD 98), but Tacitus, like his fellow early historians and ethnographers, was a master of ‘anti-language’ and barely veiled *Zeitkritik*.<sup>39</sup> His work did not, however, influence Anglo-Saxon England directly, although the ideas of *germanitas* nonetheless resonated with the Latinate ‘Germans’ later on.<sup>40</sup> In Boniface’s earliest extant letter — the preface to his *Ars grammatica*, written in Wessex — he described himself as ‘from the furthest Germans’ (‘de extremis germaniae’).<sup>41</sup> Further references would follow in his later correspondence, as we shall see. The contingent significance of these otherwise empty ethnic identifiers means we have to look for the common cultural ‘stuff’ which they came to refer to in the minds of people like Boniface. A full study of German and English ethnogenesis is best left to another study; here I simply want to concentrate on the aspects of it which pertain most directly to the missionary enterprises of the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>42</sup>

Bede and Boniface both allude to the role of oral traditions in preserving a sense of common identity. *Traditionskerne* have been seen as part of ethnic discourses which, on the whole, ‘remained ambiguous, patchy, and tentative, and frequently had to be renegotiated’.<sup>43</sup> Bede’s assorted origin myths for the different tribes of the Anglo-Saxons — *HE*, I. 13 and *HE*, V. 9 — appear to derive from different sources and are also employed to different ends: the initial migration legend uses the Germanic past to justify the conquest of Britain and the latter report appears to mark out a missionary agenda.<sup>44</sup> What kinds of tradition underpinned Bede’s stories, we

<sup>38</sup> Pohl, ‘Ethnicity, Theory and Tradition’, pp. 226–27. See also the comments of Tacitus, *Germania*, ed. by Michael Winterbottom and R. M. Ogilvie, *Cornelii Taciti Opera Minora*, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford, 1975), c. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Tacitus: Germania*, trans. by James Rives (Oxford, 1999), pp. 61–64. For a brief survey of early mentions of the *Germani*, see Malcolm Todd, *The Early Germans* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 1–13. For a masterly, if also bewildering, deconstruction of Tacitus’s style in his *Annales*, see John Henderson, ‘Tacitus: The World in Pieces’, in his *Fighting For Rome: Poets & Caesars, History & Civil War* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 257–300.

<sup>40</sup> F. Haverfield, ‘Tacitus During the Late Roman Period and the Middle Ages’, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 6 (1916), 196–201 (p. 200).

<sup>41</sup> Boniface, *Ars grammatica*. See thereafter also *Die Briefe*, nos 30, 33, 38, 50, 75, 76, 86.

<sup>42</sup> For a conscious engagement with theories of ethnogenesis in this context, see Nicholas Brooks, *Bede and the English*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1999). See also Sarah Foot, ‘The Making of *Anglecynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest’, *TRHS*, 6th series, 6 (1996), 25–49.

<sup>43</sup> Pohl, ‘Ethnicity, Theory, and Tradition’, p. 223.

<sup>44</sup> Merrills, *Geography and History*, pp. 299–300.

do not know. Ecgberht is just said to have 'known' (*noscere*) about it, but quite what he knew has been much debated. The presence of the non-German *Hunni* and *Rugi* in Ecgberht's list, combined with the apparent non-involvement of the Frisians in the *adventus Saxonum*, has led some to argue that the whole construction is more to do with 'universal mission' than ethnicity.<sup>45</sup> It is also, however, about geography: these are the 'plurimus nationes' united in their relationship to a geographical *Germania* if not by anything else.<sup>46</sup> In-groups need not be created on biological or cultural grounds if there are other external factors which can provide common ground. It is thus irrelevant whether the *Hunni* or *Rugi* are Germanic in the traditional sense of the word: they were still inhabitants of *Germania*, the perceived ancestral homeland.

What Ecgberht's 'plurimus nationes' shared in their geographical arc was a proximity to the Franks.<sup>47</sup> In some senses, the Franks *could* have fitted into a non-geographical model of 'Germanic' identity because they perceived themselves to be Christian Germanic peoples. They had also played a variety of roles in the formation of early communities and polities in Anglo-Saxon England and were supportive of successive Anglo-Saxon missionary enterprises in the North.<sup>48</sup> Fashion and literature at the Frankish court throughout the eighth and ninth centuries showed an interest in creating new forms of Germanic identity that at the same time distanced the Carolingians from the Merovingians, classicized their past by associating themselves with the Trojans, and developed new Christian sensibilities.<sup>49</sup> This creative attitude to a Germanic identity operating parallel to developments in Britain perhaps partly explains why there was no neat overlap between models,

<sup>45</sup> Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio', pp. 79–80; Georges Tugène, *L'idée de nation chez Bede le Vénérable*, Collections des Études Augustiniennes, Série Moyen Âge et Temps Modernes, 37 (Paris, 2001), p. 31. Schäferdiek, 'Fragen', pp. 176–80, takes the point about the list reflecting missionary objectives but points out there is too much evidence that there was a 'Bewußtsein einer Stammesverwandtschaft mit den Sachsen des Festlandes'. On the Frisians and the *adventus Saxonum*, see Rolf H. Bremmer, 'The Nature of the Evidence for a Frisian Participation in the *Adventus Saxonum*', in *Britain 400–600*, ed. by Bammesberger and Wollman, pp. 353–71.

<sup>46</sup> My thanks to Andy Merrills and Alex Woolf for discussing this aspect of the list with me.

<sup>47</sup> Further to this paragraph, see James T. Palmer, 'Beyond Frankish Authority? Frisia and Saxony Between the Carolingians and Anglo-Saxons', in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, ed. by Hans Sauer and Joanna Story (forthcoming).

<sup>48</sup> Wood, 'Frankish Hegemony in England'.

<sup>49</sup> For two perspectives, see Matthew Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 227–49, and Dutton, *Charlemagne's Mustache*, pp. 3–42.

but things were also complicated by wider politics. It was often difficult to disentangle Frankish mission from Frankish imperialism.<sup>50</sup> The *Annales Mettenses priores* recalled that Pippin II's first intention as sole leader of the Franks from 691 onwards was to reconquer the Saxons, Frisians, Alamanni, Bavarians, Aquitainians, Gascons, and Bretons over whom the Franks had recently lost lordship.<sup>51</sup> His support for the mission of Willibrord is striking in that context, and it is perhaps no surprise that rebellion on the frontiers often brought the threat of apostasy.<sup>52</sup> For good reasons the Greek proverb ran that 'if the Frank is your friend, he is clearly not your neighbour'.<sup>53</sup> They were not part of the brotherhood (*germanitas*!) and could indeed be cast as something against which the peoples of *Germania* could develop a shared sense of affinity despite their cultural differences.

Once in *Germania* itself later in the 730s, Boniface wrote to everyone 'de stirpe et prosapia Anglorum' in Britain about their continental origins. Encouraging the *Angli* to pray for the conversion of the Saxons, he wrote 'miseremini illorum, quia et ipsi solent dicere: "de uno sanguine et de uno osse sumus"'.<sup>54</sup> The use of 'solent dicere' suggests the persistence of some kind of recognition on the continent that the two peoples were related. Boniface's need to point this out in the first place, however, might also suggest that this kinship was not necessarily something the *Angli* always remembered or cared about. There are constructions in the letter which reveal something deeper about the way Boniface viewed the relationship. He could have called the inhabitants of Britain *Saxones*, and thus emphasized their common bonds through the sharing of a label. In using *Angli*, however, he created a dichotomy in which the term carried Christian overtones and *Saxones* pagan ones. He developed this ideology by arguing that the reward for the *Angli* would be in the *curia angelorum* — echoing the story that Gregory the Great had sent Augustine to England because he thought the *Angli* resembled *angeli*.<sup>55</sup> It is unlikely

<sup>50</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 48.

<sup>51</sup> *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. by Bernhard von Simson, MGH SRG, 10 (Hannover, 1905), s.a. 691. On the annals as propaganda for Carolingian policy, see Yitzhak Hen, 'The Annals of Metz and the Merovingian Past', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 175–90.

<sup>52</sup> For examples of political and religious revolt against the Franks, see Willibald, *VB*, c. 4 (Frisia), and *VWbad*, c. 6 (Saxony).

<sup>53</sup> Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SRG, 25 (Hannover, 1880), c. 16: 'ΤΟΝ ΦΡΑΝΚΟΝ ΦΙΛΟΝ ΕΧΙC, ΓΙΤΟΝΑ ΟΥΚ ΕΧΙC'.

<sup>54</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 46: 'remember them, because they themselves are accustomed to say "we are of one blood and one bone"'.  
<sup>55</sup> Bede, *HE*, II. 1: 'Rursus ergo interrogauit, quod esset uocabulum gentis illius. Responsum est quod Angli uocarentur. At ille, "Bene", inquit, "nam et angelicam habent faciem, et tales

Boniface had read Northumbrian sources for this pun, but he had studied copies of Gregory's letters in Rome.<sup>56</sup> His message was understood, at least by some, and a reply from Bishop Torthelm of Leicester was preserved in the *Collectio communis*, pledging the support of prayer to the conversion of 'gens nostra'.<sup>57</sup> A later letter from the Anglo-Saxon missionary Wigbert referred to the 'regio gentis nostrae, id est Saxonorum'.<sup>58</sup> Boniface may have started with a sense of identity from oral traditions, but in his letter he shaped it just as Bede had done to include a Gregorian sense of responsibility towards the pagans of the continent. The fluidity of identity lent itself well to reforming discourses.

The influence of a Germanic identity, as distinct from an English or Saxon one, is clearer only in another letter, this time from Boniface to his friend Abbess Eadburga of Thanet in around 735. Eadburga had sent Boniface some books to help him in his work abroad and he replied with thanks and some reflections on his mission:

Carissimam sororem remunerator aeternus iustorum operum in superna laetificet curia angelorum, quae [. . .] exulem Germanicum spiritali lumine consolata est, quia, qui tenebrosos angulos Germanicarum gentium lustrare debet, nisi habeat lucernam pedibus et lumen semitis suis verbum Domini in laqueum mortis incidet.<sup>59</sup>

This has been described by Andy Orchard as "off-duty" Boniface: light, witty and learned' because of its playful punning and literary allusions.<sup>60</sup> A sense of kinship is set up by his self-reference as 'exul Germanicus' and the identification of his missionary targets as the 'gentes Germanicarum'.<sup>61</sup> This is reinforced further through the rewards in the 'curia angelorum' and the location of the Germanic peoples in the 'tenebrosi anguli' (to which he is the light), again echoing Gregorian puns. The reference to *anguli* maybe confirms the Roman origins of Boniface's nomenclature, because Gregory had once described the 'gens Anglorum in angulo mundi posita'

angelorum in caelis decet esse coheredes'. On the likelihood of these puns being genuine, see Michael Richter, 'Bede's *Angli*: Angles or English?', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 99–114.

<sup>56</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 33.

<sup>57</sup> Torthelm, *Die Briefe*, no. 47.

<sup>58</sup> Wigbert, *Die Briefe*, no. 137. On Saxon identity in this later period of the mission, see Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull', pp. 269–72.

<sup>59</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 30: 'May He who rewards all righteous acts cause my dearest sister to rejoice in the choir of angels above because she has consoled with spiritual light [. . .] an exile in Germany who has to enlighten the dark corners of the Germanic peoples and would fall into deadly snares if he had not the Word of God as a lamp unto his feet and light upon his path.'

<sup>60</sup> Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources', p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> Palmer, 'Saxon or European?', p. 854.



— a visualization of the world taken from early medieval maps.<sup>62</sup> (Geographical concepts, it seems, were an integral part of early perceptions of English identity.) Factor in too the tightly packed succession of biblical allusions in the letter and the end result is a complex patchwork of ideas that again reshapes layers of Germanic identity within new Christian ideals and a geographical landscape ripe with metaphor.

The papacy can be seen as a distinct influence on the ideas of Bede and Boniface, both because of Anglo-Saxon interest in Roman sources and because of the direct actions of a number of popes. Differences between Bede's account of Gregory's Angles/angels story and a version found in the anonymous Whitby *Vita Gregorii papae* suggest traditions were being perpetuated and developed in Northumbria.<sup>63</sup> In the south, Canterbury preserved letters and traditions which were to inform Bede and possibly Boniface too when he visited the city in 714. The archbishop whom Boniface most likely met in Canterbury was Berhtwald, who had been consecrated in Rome itself in 692 by Pope Sergius I — the same Pope who had consecrated Willibrord as bishop of the Frisians in 690.<sup>64</sup> Direct papal influence can also be seen in Boniface's own visits to Rome, following in the footsteps of Wilfrid, Daniel of Winchester, the abbots Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrith, and, in a sense, figures like Theodore of Tarsus and his colleague Hadrian who were sent from Rome to establish a new school in England.<sup>65</sup> The Germanic identities reflected by Bede and Boniface were thus being incorporated into missionary ideologies in the context of lively interaction between Rome and the social circles which provided many of the early missionaries.

<sup>62</sup> Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistolae*, ed. by Paul Ewald and Ludo M. Hartmann, MGH Epp., 2 (Berlin, 1899), VIII. 29; Richter, 'Bede's *Angli*', p. 103.

<sup>63</sup> These traditions were more likely textual in origin: see Alan Thacker, 'Memorializing Gregory the Great: The Origins and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries', *EME*, 7 (1998), 59–84 (pp. 63–71); Kate Rambridge, 'Doctor noster sanctus: The Northumbrians and Pope Gregory', in *Rome and the North: The Early Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe*, ed. by Rolf H. Bremmer, Kees Dekker, and David F. Johnson (Leuven, 2001), pp. 1–26.

<sup>64</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 8 and V. 11.

<sup>65</sup> Bede, *HE*, IV. 1; Bede, *Historia abbatum*, ed. by Plummer, *Baedae Opera*, 1, cc. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 15, 21. On pilgrimages to Rome, see Lutz E. von Padberg, 'Missionare und Mönche auf dem Weg nach Rom und Monte Cassino im 8. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 111 (2000), 145–68. On Theodore, see *Archbishop Theodore*, ed. by Lapidge.



None of this is to say that the papacy was in any position to direct mission in the eighth century. Part of Wolfgang Fritze's influential thesis about universal mission suggested that this had happened in the seventh century but, as Timothy Reuter warned, too strong an interpretation of this argument would stretch the evidence too far.<sup>66</sup> This was a period when the papacy was finding a new role within Christendom because of the changing horizons of the Mediterranean world.<sup>67</sup> The North was to play a significant part in these developments. Gregory II explained to Charles Martel that Boniface's mission was 'ad predicandem plebibus Germaniae gentis' — a phrase Boniface was to repeat in his international correspondence.<sup>68</sup> The Pope's successors, the third Pope Gregory and the Greek pope Zacharias, both adopted the same language during the reorganization of the Bavarian Church and Frankish churches.<sup>69</sup> There is some evidence then to suggest that the papacy was happy to make use of the union of *germanitas* and mission which drove some Anglo-Saxons to work abroad.

### *Ethnicity in Missionary Hagiography*

Any suggestion that missionaries were interested in the unity of Germanic identities is curiously absent from most eighth- or ninth-century *vitae*.<sup>70</sup> These sources should not, therefore, be taken as expressing the same views as the historical and epistolary evidence. Many people who read the *vitae* in Bavaria or Gaul were not related to the same *gentes* and so were unlikely to be inspired by that particular aspect of the Anglo-Saxons' work. Again we are confronted with Germanic identity

<sup>66</sup> Compare Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio', pp. 106–23, and Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', p. 94.

<sup>67</sup> See Chapter 4 below. The key arguments here are those of Noble, *Republic of St Peter*; Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1435–80.

<sup>68</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 20, and also no. 24. For Boniface's use of the phrase, see *Die Briefe*, nos 75, 76, 86.

<sup>69</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 45, 50, 60.

<sup>70</sup> This observation is also made by von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, p. 67, who concluded that it cannot have been that important. The evidence for references to the *Angli* and related concepts in the *vitae* is rather inexpertly discussed by Gernot Wieland in 'England in the German Legends of Anglo-Saxon Saints', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. by Michael Korhammer, Karl Reichl, and Hans Sauer (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 193–212.

as a fragmented concept inconsistently promulgated, understood, or valued.<sup>71</sup> Moreover if 'universal mission' was a widely recognized ideal, distinct from missionary work itself, then the Anglo-Saxons' motivations would have had little place in a model account of a mission. Lutz von Padberg has argued that the distinctiveness of particular peoples such as the continental Saxons was often glossed over to create an impression of Christian universality in contrast to the reality of cultural and political diversity.<sup>72</sup> At the same time it is perhaps notable that Frankish writers were not even sure what to call the Anglo-Saxons; the anonymous *Vita Alcuini* from Ferrières, for example, variously used the terms *Angli*, *Engelsaxoni*, and, less explicably, *Britti* and *Scotti* to describe Anglo-Saxons at Tours.<sup>73</sup> The ethnic identities and missionary programmes promoted by Bede and Boniface seem to have been little understood outside their close circles; the disruption between the Franks and their neighbours seems here clearer than ever.

For the majority of missionary hagiographies, denoting a saint's ethnic background was merely part of hagiographical formulae. Athanasius began his description of St Anthony with the comment that he was 'by descent an Egyptian'; Sulpicius likewise opened that St Martin was 'born in Sabaria in Pannonia but brought up in Ticinum in Italy'.<sup>74</sup> Such comments in the first couple of lines of a hagiography made the saints people with an easily identifiable earthly connection.<sup>75</sup> The first continental hagiographer to describe one of the Anglo-Saxon saints as 'de gentis Anglorum' was Liudger in c. 800.<sup>76</sup> No doubt Liudger's education in York under Alcuin was of some influence here.<sup>77</sup> But when he came to write about missionary work, Liudger emphasized the importance of non-Saxons as missionaries

<sup>71</sup> See further Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans?', pp. 246–47.

<sup>72</sup> Lutz E. von Padberg, 'Zum Sachsenbild in hagiographischen Quellen', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung*, 12 (1999), 173–91 (p. 191).

<sup>73</sup> *Vita Alcuini*, ed. by Wilhelm Arndt, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), cc. 1, 4, 18. On the Frankish uncertainty in the labelling of Anglo-Saxons, see Foot, 'Making of *Angelcynn*', pp. 43–44.

<sup>74</sup> Athanasius (Latin trans. by Evagrius of Antioch), *Vita Antonii*, c. 1, *PL*, 73. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita s. Martini*, ed. by Jacques Fontaine, SC, 133–35 (Paris, 1967), c. 1.

<sup>75</sup> On the social functions of saints' cults, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christendom* (Chicago, 1981); debated in *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by James Howard-Johnston and Paul Anthony Hayward (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>76</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 1. Note the separation between geographical and ethnic identity.

<sup>77</sup> Altfred, *VLger*, I. 11. On Liudger in York, see Story, *Carolingian Connections*, p. 131; Angenendt, *Liudger*, pp. 89–90; Jan Gerschow, 'Liudger und die angelsächsische Kirche', in *805: Liudger wird Bischof*, ed. by Isenburg and Rommé, pp. 141–48.

and missionary targets because he wanted to encourage Frankish nobles to support that work.<sup>78</sup> The universality of mission was paramount: it was not for people to pick and choose who to save. Other hagiographers writing about the missions, however, made little but passing mention of ethnicity, following in the model of Athanasius and Sulpicius.<sup>79</sup>

In many respects the indifference towards ethnicity is symptomatic of a disruption between individual motivations and hagiographical representations started within the circles of the Anglo-Saxons themselves. Willibald, for example, made only one reference to the *gens Anglorum*, and even then only in a passing comment about the Old English name for London.<sup>80</sup> No connection is made between ethnicity and mission. The *gentes Germaniae*, on the other hand, are referred to later when Boniface makes a speech to Willibrord, defending his decision to leave Frisia to pursue his papal commission to the Germans.<sup>81</sup> These are, of course, the same Frisians whom Bede and Ecgerht appeared to consider part of the Germanic continuum and whom Boniface thought important enough to end his life evangelizing; however, competition between the German and Frisian cults of Boniface after 754 meant it was desirable for Mainz to play down the connection between the martyr, Utrecht, and Dokkum.<sup>82</sup> There was a gap between Boniface's apparent motivations and the ways in which his successors felt able to portray him as a saint.

The scale of the hagiographical reinterpretation of missionary motives is clearest at Fulda in the writings of the priest Rudolf. His *Vita Leobae* (836) made reference to the *gens Anglorum*, but again he made no effort to make Germanic kinship a relevant factor in the story. He described Britain as the home of the *natio Anglorum*, Leoba's parents as belonging to the same peoples, and later made reference to a *terra Anglorum*.<sup>83</sup> Rudolf went on to write the *Translatio s. Alexandri* in 855 for the descendants of Duke Widukind, in which he described the origins of the Saxons as follows: 'Saxonum gens, sicut tradit antiquitas, ab Anglis Britanniae

<sup>78</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 11; Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker', p. 83.

<sup>79</sup> See for example *VBurch*, c. 2: 'Venerabilis Burchardus, Anglorum genere nobilis'.

<sup>80</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 4: 'pervenit ad locum [...] usque hodie antiquo Anglorum Saxonumque vocabulo appellatur Lundenwich'.

<sup>81</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Palmer, '“Vigorous Rule” of Bishop Lull', pp. 273–74. Again it might be pertinent to bear in mind the argument of Bremmer, 'Nature of the Evidence', that the Frisians were independent *like* the Anglo-Saxons rather than part of a group *with* them.

<sup>83</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, cc. 2, 6, 9.

incolis egressa, per Oceanum navigans Germaniae litoribus studio et necessitate quarendarum sedium appulsa est, in loco qui vocatur Haduloha.<sup>84</sup> This happened, Rudolf continued, in the time of Theuderic I (d. 533), who struggled to defeat them and was forced to allow them to settle near Thuringia. Procopius, writing in Byzantium in the sixth century, had heard reports of such ‘return migrations’, but his rather garbled account more likely refers to the British settlement of Brittany; any close association between the two stories is unlikely.<sup>85</sup> In the hands of Rudolf, any ‘reality’ behind the story is anyway secondary. It provided a legend which mirrored the journey of the *Angli* to evangelize the *Saxones* in the eighth century but without the explicit commentary of Bede or Boniface.

It was in the writings of Rudolf that the *germanitas* of the Anglo-Saxons’ heritage was finally incorporated into the ethnography of Tacitus. Once Theuderic had managed to settle the Saxons beyond the Thuringians, Rudolf moved the short distance from *historia* to ‘reveal’ something of the Saxons’ culture. They did not readily intermarry with other races; they reckoned time by nights rather than days; they worshipped Mercury.<sup>86</sup> These are all details derived from Tacitus’s general description of the *Germani*, here (re)defining the Saxons as ‘sicut omnes Germaniam incolentes nationes’, despite their absence from the original Roman text.<sup>87</sup> Using Tacitus is unlikely to have impressed Rudolf’s secular audience: few educated people outside circles at Fulda and Auxerre, let alone Saxon nobles, would have known the text to recognize the textual parallels.<sup>88</sup> As a method of composition, however,

<sup>84</sup> Rudolf of Fulda, *Translatio s. Alexandri*, ed. by Georg H. Pertz, MGH SS, 2 (Hannover, 1829), c. 1: ‘The Saxon people, according to ancient tradition, came from the Angles living in Britain, and sailed across the ocean to the German shores, intending by necessity to find a place to settle in a place called Hadeln.’ On this passage, see now Matthias Becher, *Rex, Dux und Gens: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des sächsischen Herzogtums im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert* (Husum, 1996), pp. 32–38.

<sup>85</sup> E. A. Thompson, ‘Procopius on Britta and Britannia’, *Classical Quarterly*, n.s., 30 (1980), 498–507. Compare the older view of Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 6–8. A simultaneous influx of British and Saxon invaders in western France is not implausible during the reign of Theuderic, judging by Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum X*, ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM, 1 (Hannover, 1951), V. 19 and X. 9.

<sup>86</sup> Rudolf, *Translatio s. Alexandri*, cc. 1–2.

<sup>87</sup> On the earliest reports of *Saxones*, see Todd, *The Early Germans*, pp. 216–19; Torsten Capelle, *Die Sachsen des frühen Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1998), esp. pp. 12–17.

<sup>88</sup> Haverfield, ‘Tacitus’, pp. 199–200; Innes, ‘Teutons or Trojans?’, p. 238; Michael Winterbottom, ‘Tacitus’, in *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by Leighton Reynolds (Oxford, 1983), pp. 409–10 (p. 410).

adapting classical texts was part of the Fuldan obsession with authority and repetition. Rudolf's abbot, Hrabanus Maurus, would rarely compose if he had satisfactory texts from which to borrow.<sup>89</sup> Tacitus thus provided Rudolf with a newly rediscovered bedrock of textual authority on which to praise the Christianization of the Saxons and the translation of the relics of St Alexander to Wildeshausen. Widukind of Corvey and Adam of Bremen scarcely looked beyond Rudolf's repackaging of *Germania* for their *origo Saxonum* in subsequent centuries.<sup>90</sup>

It is from Saxony that we find the closest thing in hagiography to a description of an Anglo-Saxon who wanted to convert specific peoples. The Bremen *Vita Willehadi* reported the origins of the last mission to the continent as follows:

Denique, accepta consecratione presbiterii, audit quod Fresones atque Saxones populi hactenus increduli atque pagani, relicta idolorum cultura, fidei catholicae quodammodo iam coepissent ambire mysteria, ac sacramento vetustatis cuperent maculis.<sup>91</sup>

From whom Willehad had 'heard' anything is, as with Ecgbert, left unspecified. The court of Alchred sponsored some missionary activity — notably that of Aluiberht — and a later letter about mission from Alcuin to a friend in Saxony might suggest Franco-Northumbrian connections were at work in the background.<sup>92</sup> There remains, however, no explicit connection made between Anglo-Germanic kinship and missionary work, although that might be implied in the passage. The author of the *Vita Willehadi* had used Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* as a model, but Alcuin had written only vaguely that 'in borealibus mundi messem quidem multam esse, sed operarios paucos', and had put the emphasis on the universal mission of the apostolic decree.<sup>93</sup> The author of the *Vita Willehadi* appears to have thought

<sup>89</sup> On Hrabanus's reputation, see Raymond Kottje, 'Hrabanus Maurus – "Praeceptor Germaniae"?', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 31 (1975), 534–35.

<sup>90</sup> Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, ed. by P. Hirsch, MGH SRG, 60 (Hannover, 1935), I. 6–7; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SRG, 2 (Hannover, 1917), I. 4–7.

<sup>91</sup> *VWbad*, c. 1: 'And so, having accepted consecration as a priest, [Willehad] heard that the hitherto disbelieving and pagan Frisian and Saxon people, abandoning their culture of idols, now began to embrace in a certain way the mysteries of the Catholic faith and they wished to make clean the ancient blemishes through sacrament.'

<sup>92</sup> York Annals, s.a. 767 = Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, ed. by T. Arnold, Rolls Series, 75.2 (London, 1885), I. 46; Alfrid, *VLger*, I. 10; Alcuin, *Epistolae*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), no. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 5: 'in the northern parts of the world the harvest was great but the labourers few'. On the metaphor, see further Story, *Carolingian Connections*, pp. 219–21, and Kate

that *gens* was more important than Alcuin had done, perhaps because he was writing in Saxony where such motivations would have made a Saxon audience more receptive to the cult of Willehad. Interpretation of the Anglo-Saxons' activities lay squarely in the contexts in which they were produced.

In only one early *vita* did everything add up to anything approaching the models of Bede and Boniface. Alas, it is the highly corrupt and complicated Utrecht *Vita altera Bonifatii*. The priest of St Martin's had actually read the *Historia ecclesiastica* as a source for information on Britain and its history.<sup>94</sup> He used it independently, however, to build up his own spiritual geography, with the sweet odour of the island transmitted to the continent through the saints. He also wrote that 'Beatus Bonifacius gentile solum in insula que Britannia dicitur habuit, quam modo gens incolit Anglorum, que a Saxonibus originem traxisse putatur [. . .]. Angli vero ab angulo, id est firmamento regni derivari non absurde dicuntur'.<sup>95</sup> The Bedan *adventus Saxonum* and Gregorian punning thus came together to provide a platform for the Boniface story. To complete the whole set of ethnic concepts, Boniface promotes the idea of mission to the *gentes Germanicarum* himself whilst in Rome.<sup>96</sup> At no point, however, is Boniface said to have gone on a missionary venture because of these webs of ethnic identities; the narrative is rather a relentless march towards 5 June 754 and the creation of a new martyr. Causation is once more dissolved by the shape of the narrative.

The relationship between mission and ethnicity is, in the end, as inconsistent and context-specific as the nature of 'ethnicity' itself. Boniface, Bede, and Egberht seem to have perceived of a place for *germanitas* or *Germania* in their missionary model(s), but did not necessarily see this as the whole nature of the mission (as we shall see). Some hagiographers in Frisia and Saxony seem to have received some imperfect version of the connection, but no one joined up the dots to elucidate some missionary programme. Other hagiographers ignored (or were ignorant of) it all together. The missions were more than an ethnic project. An inescapable aspect of the Anglo-Saxon missions was that, whatever layers of affinity any

Rambridge, 'Alcuin, Willibrord, and the Cultivation of Faith', *Haskins Society Journal*, 14 (2005 for 2003), 15–33.

<sup>94</sup> *VaB*, c. 6, for example, contains passages derived from Bede, *HE*, I. 15 and III. 19.

<sup>95</sup> *VaB*, c. 6: 'the blessed Boniface originated from the island called Britain, which is now inhabited by the race of the English, who are thought to trace their descent to the Saxons [. . .]. It is not absurd to say the Angles are truly "from the corner" as it is from the location of their kingdom that they derive their name.'

<sup>96</sup> *VaB*, cc. 8 and 10.

individual perceived, walking into pagan or Frankish territories as an Anglo-Saxon Christian immediately necessitated confronting differences too. It is thus to the Anglo-Saxons as *peregrini* — foreigners, pilgrims — that we turn next.

### Peregrinatio, *Mission*, and *Stabilitas*

Bishops and monks could not just up and leave their homes in a regulated Church. Christian leaders and writers were always at pains to control religious travellers, lest they disrupted the Church or brought it into disrepute. But many would-be travellers could find defence in the rhetoric of *peregrinatio*, of wanderings for the love of Christ. Early Christianity was rich with possible models, from the Acts of the Apostles to the anchoritic traditions of Egypt.<sup>97</sup> The word *peregrinus* itself was originally a Latin word that simply referred to anyone in the Roman Empire who had come from beyond its frontiers and was thus not officially a citizen.<sup>98</sup> It came to be adopted in the fifth century by Augustine of Hippo in *De civitate Dei*. Augustine wrote: 'Et quoniam, quamdiu est in isto mortali corpore, peregrinatur a Domino: ambulat per fidem, non per speciem.'<sup>99</sup> He continued, 'homini mortali est cum immortali Dei'.<sup>100</sup> *Peregrinatio* was perceived here as metaphorical wandering of the Earth and the act of living an ascetic Christian life until heaven was obtained; geographical space and political structure were unimportant. Indeed, other influential writers like Jerome actively discouraged the practice of pilgrimage lest it detract from inner piety.<sup>101</sup> A perceived proliferation of 'wandering, begging monks' in the early days of Christianity was considered something of a problem by those, like Augustine, whose episcopal authority was eroded by the popularity of

<sup>97</sup> Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 30 (Berkeley, 2000); Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 33 (Berkeley, 2002).

<sup>98</sup> 'Peregrinus 2', D. Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, vol. VI (London, 1886), p. 271.

<sup>99</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, ed. by Bernard Dombert and Alphonsius Kalb, CCL, 48 (Turnhout, 1955), XIX. 14: 'And because of the Lord he wanders as long as he is in that mortal body: he walked for faith, not for appearances.'

<sup>100</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XIX. 14: 'mortal men are with the immortal God'.

<sup>101</sup> Jerome, *Epistolae*, PL, 22, no. 58: 2–3.



unregulated spiritual wanderers.<sup>102</sup> Society increasingly rewarded those who took themselves outside the villages and towns and away from worldly affairs.<sup>103</sup> Many more pious individuals were inspired to go on pilgrimages to specific places connected with holiness such as Jerusalem, and the same word *peregrinatio* was used to describe these journeys.<sup>104</sup> Through the act of travelling individuals could atone for sins, purify their soul, and help ease the way to heaven.

For many monks and nuns in the West, travelling was regulated by codes such as the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>105</sup> St Benedict condemned wandering monks (*gyrovagi*) — just as Augustine, Cassian, and the anonymous ‘Master’ had done before him — for their selfish wanderings and abuse of the hospitality of more disciplined people devoted to a religious life.<sup>106</sup> They provided a literary motif which embodied the vices of the reckless, and thus helped to illustrate the virtues of the monks who maintained a stable and regulated lifestyle (the *coenobi*).<sup>107</sup> Good monks could still travel outside the confines of the monastery on business, but there were careful guidelines laid down. Pious travellers, moreover, were to be welcomed: *peregrini* who were found to be worthy on interview by the abbot were to be given hospitality and even encouraged to stay if their character would be beneficial to the community.<sup>108</sup> Nonetheless, monks who found inspiration in the *Regula s. Benedicti* often took vows of *stabilitas loci*. Neither the idea of *peregrinatio* nor the idea of monks working in the mission field sat comfortably with such vows and so *peregrini* and would-be missionaries had to make it clear that they were not the

<sup>102</sup> Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, pp. 1–4. For a powerful argument that many instances of these wanderers were in fact the imagined literary motif of early Italian writers, see Brett D. Shaw, ‘Who were the Circumcellions?’, in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa*, ed. by A. H. Merrills (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 227–58.

<sup>103</sup> Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, p. 5; Peter Brown, ‘The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity’, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 61 (1971), 80–101.

<sup>104</sup> On medieval pilgrimage, see Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (London, 1975); Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700–c. 1500* (Basingstoke, 2002).

<sup>105</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti*, ed. by Adalbert de Vogüé and Jean Neufville, SC, 181–86 (Paris, 1971–77).

<sup>106</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti*, ed. by de Vogüé and Neufville, c. 1. See Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, pp. 8–10.

<sup>107</sup> Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 119–20; Shaw, ‘Who were the Circumcellions?’, p. 256.

<sup>108</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti*, c. 53. See also cc. 56 and 61.



'wandering, begging monks' or *gyrovagi* so vilified in the late antique Mediterranean world.<sup>109</sup>

The concept of *peregrinatio* was fused with extensive travelling in sixth-century Ireland to become a more austere monastic ideal, and it is this refined model that historians have argued was particularly influential in Europe between the sixth and tenth centuries.<sup>110</sup> Augustine's argument that Christians did not have an earthly home had particular resonance for the Irish because, just as *peregrinatio* had a purifying quality for Augustine, in Irish law codes criminals could be punished by being expelled from their homeland.<sup>111</sup> With the growth of Christianity in Ireland a corresponding ascetic ideal developed where people voluntarily left their homeland and kin in order to live a purer life, free of earthly connections and possessions. Biblical precepts were found in Genesis and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke to reinforce the Christian legitimacy of such behaviour.<sup>112</sup> One of the most successful Irish *peregrini* was St Columba, one of the Uí Néill family who dominated the politics of Ireland. According to his hagiographer Adomnán, he fled to the isolation of the island of Iona in Dal Riada to pursue a religious life in the model of ascetics such as St Anthony.<sup>113</sup> Any renunciation of the secular world was more rhetorical than real: not only did Columba remain involved in Irish affairs, but generations of Ionan abbots including Adomnán were drawn from branches of the

<sup>109</sup> See for example the case of Rimbert, *VA*, discussed in Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 245–46.

<sup>110</sup> See Arnold Angenendt, 'Die irische Peregrinatio und ihre Auswirkungen auf dem Kontinent vor dem Jahre 800', in *Die Iren und Europa*, ed. by Löwe, pp. 52–79, for a summary of the spread of the idea of Irish *peregrinatio*.

<sup>111</sup> Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish *peregrinatio*', *Celtica*, 11 (1976), 43–59. See also Michael J. Enright, 'Iromanie – Irophobie Revisited: A Suggested Frame of Reference for Considering Continental Reactions to Irish *peregrini* in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 367–80; Michael Richter, *Ireland and her Neighbours in the Seventh Century* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 41–47.

<sup>112</sup> Gen. 12. 1: 'Now the Lord had said unto Abram, "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land I shall show thee".' Luke 14. 26: 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' Matt. 19. 21: 'Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me".' The importance of these three passages is discussed by Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini*, pp. 126–23.

<sup>113</sup> Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*.

Uí Néill. Moreover, Columba's initial decision to head to Iona might have been motivated by political conditions rather than piety.<sup>114</sup>

On the continent, the most influential example of the Irish ideal was Columbanus, who agreed with Augustine that 'patriam [...] non habemus in terra, quia Pater noster in caelis est'.<sup>115</sup> Taking a particularly physical view of this notion, he left his homeland and his family in c. 590 and spent the rest of his life in holy work on the continent.<sup>116</sup> That work was enshrined in monasteries he founded such as Bobbio in Italy and Luxeuil in Burgundy, in which *peregrini* could live a communal monastic life more in keeping with the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>117</sup> The few extant letters of Columbanus, however, also refer to *peregrini* as legal outsiders in the Roman sense. Most refer to disputes between the Columbanian monks and the Burgundians over the reckoning of Easter and saw Columbanus seeking support from successive popes because he felt that as a *peregrinus* he lacked the insider authority to answer his detractors on his own terms.<sup>118</sup> The popular image of Columbanus as a perpetual traveller, however, comes from Jonas of Bobbio's seventh-century *Vita Columbani*, which emphasized Columbanus's radical break from his homeland.<sup>119</sup> In one story, Columbanus fell foul of the wrath of the Neustrian queen Brunhilda, and her husband, Theuderic II, tried to expel the monk back to Ireland saying: 'Martyrii coronam a me tibi inlaturam speras; non esse tantae demetiae, ut hoc tantum patraret scelus, sed [...] ut qui ab omnium saecularium mores disciscat,

<sup>114</sup> In the *Annals of Ulster*, ed. and trans. by Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin, 1983), s.a. 563, the impression is that Columba left after the Battle of Moín Daire.

<sup>115</sup> Columbanus, *Instructiones*, VIII. 1, in *Sancti Columbani Opera*, ed. by G. S. M. Walker, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 2 (Dublin, 1970): 'we have no home on Earth because our father is in Heaven'. Columbanus is described by Angenendt as the father of *peregrinatio* ('Die irische Peregrinatio', pp. 52–54).

<sup>116</sup> A concise summary of Columbanus's work and impact is given in Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, pp. 136–43. See also the essays in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. by Clarke and Brennan, and *Columbanus*, ed. by Lapidge.

<sup>117</sup> Angenendt, 'Die irische Peregrinatio', pp. 69–71. On the principles of the *Regula*, see Jane B. Stevenson, 'The Monastic Rules of Columbanus', in *Columbanus*, ed. by Lapidge, pp. 203–16. The mixed Columbanian-Benedictine Rule came to be an important element in the monastic foundations of the Merovingians: see Prinz's survey in *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 152–85.

<sup>118</sup> Columbanus, *Epistolae*, nos 1, 3, 5.

<sup>119</sup> On the *vita*, see Ian Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 63–80.

quo venerit, ea via repetare studeat.<sup>120</sup> Jonas wrote that Columbanus, led by Theuderic's soldiers, strenuously resisted the idea of breaking his vow never to return home; but fortunately for the monk, a miracle occurred (the sea refused to calm) and the soldiers released him.<sup>121</sup> It was clear to Jonas that the ascetic values which had driven Columbanus to leave his home were an integral part of his sanctity. In hagiography, the real-life virtues of Columbanus were crafted into a model and detached from more pragmatic concerns, just as they had been for Columba.

### *Irish Influence on Anglo-Saxon 'Peregrinatio'*

In the 1970s and 1980s scholars argued at length over the Irish influence on the Anglo-Saxon missions. Most notably Arnold Angenendt, Michael Richter, and Augustine van Berkum discerned the influence of Irish ascetic wanderings on the Anglo-Saxon missions, challenging the primacy of ethnicity as a driving factor.<sup>122</sup> Bede's account of Ecgberht, apart from being located in Ireland, appears to allude to insular perceptions of *peregrinatio* because of the proposed trade-off between mission and pilgrimage to Rome.<sup>123</sup> Stories about Columba and Columbanus had bound the concepts together by portraying missionary work amongst the Picts and Alemanni respectively in the course of peregrinations. 'The ideal of pilgrimage,' Richard Fletcher wrote, 'was absolutely central to the missionary impulse of the early Middle Ages.'<sup>124</sup> The extent to which the Anglo-Saxon missionaries consciously modelled themselves on Irish ascetics is a much more difficult thing to establish. Willibald commented in passing that Irish travellers came to preach, 'sicut illis regionibus moris est'.<sup>125</sup> But such a phrase says equally 'it is not the custom *here*', be that Mainz or Wessex. Before analysing the hagiographical evidence, it will

<sup>120</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 18–19: "You hope that I will grant you the martyr's crown; there will not be such madness so that this great crime can be perpetrated, but [...] since you withdraw from all sacred customs, you should be made to repeat your way [i. e. to go home]."

<sup>121</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, I. 23, which explains the miracle with the statement 'Mirantes itaque omnes cognovere, non esse voluntatem Dei, ut retro amplius repetaret'.

<sup>122</sup> Richter, 'Der irische Hintergrund', and 'The Young Willibrord'; van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried'; Ó Cróinín, 'Rath Melsigi'. For a survey of the literature, see Honée, 'St Willibrord in Recent Historiography'.

<sup>123</sup> Angenendt, 'Die irische Peregrinatio', p. 65; Schäferdiek, 'Fragen', p. 175. See also Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 44.

<sup>124</sup> Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, p. 232.

<sup>125</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 1: 'as is the custom in those parts'.

be necessary to examine some of the evidence for Irish influence on the Anglo-Saxons who travelled to work on the continent.

Of the missionaries, Willibrord has been interpreted by different scholars as either the most Roman or most Irish of all. He was educated in Northumbria in the Wilfridian foundation of Ripon. For Levison and Wampach, writing in the 1940s and 1950s, the connection to the arch-Romanist St Wilfrid bound him to Roman ideals, including those of the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>126</sup> There is, however, no strong evidence to suggest that Wilfrid's ideals were felt so strongly in Ripon. This led Augustine van Berkum to argue that Irish ideals — identified implausibly as 'Columbanian' — were more significant, as exemplified by Willibrord's move from Ripon to Rath Melsigi.<sup>127</sup> Then, starting from Ireland, Willibrord appears more like an Irish *peregrinus*. This is to paint things too broadly and to assume a single coherent Irish culture Willibrord could internalize. In truth we have no evidence for his motivations or interests from this period of his life.

Some evidence for Willibrord's cultural interests is evident from Echternach, his monastery near Trier. Echternach was established specifically for *fratres peregrini* and he was sometimes referred to as a 'bishop of the monastery' — a distinctly Irish title.<sup>128</sup> None of this means Willibrord himself was committed to specifically Irish ideals and perhaps emphasizes the need to avoid simplistic stereotypes. The martyrology attached to his calendar shows signs of Columbanian influence, but this may reflect little more than Columbanian influence on Frankish monasticism.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, in a marginal note in the calendar itself, it is written simply that he 'veniebat ultra mare in Francea' ('came across the sea to Frankia'): his travel could be described without resort to spiritual overtones.<sup>130</sup> The same calendar also betrays only the faintest interest in the saints of the Celtic Church compared to those of Northumbria and Trier.<sup>131</sup> His Anglo-Saxon social circle, even if we

<sup>126</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 54–55; Wampach, *Willibrord*, pp. 162–70 and also p. 216.

<sup>127</sup> van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried', p. 393.

<sup>128</sup> Echternach, no. 15.

<sup>129</sup> On the martyrology, see now Felice Lifshitz, *The Name of the Saint: The Martyrology of Jerome and Access to the Sacred in Francia 627–827* (Notre Dame, IN, 2006).

<sup>130</sup> *The Calendar of Willibrord*, ed. by H. W. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Society, 55 (London, 1918), fol. 39b.

<sup>131</sup> The alternative view is held by Ó Cróinín, 'Rath Melsigi', pp. 28–36; Richter, 'The Young Willibrord', p. 29; van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried', p. 397; and Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, p. 88.

exclude Wilfrid, included figures like Bede, Ecgberht, and Acca of Hexham who were both campaigners for Roman practices and admirers of Irish asceticism.<sup>132</sup> But perhaps most tellingly, his involvement in late Merovingian politics and his status as a powerful landowner shows someone far from renouncing the world in any ascetic sense.<sup>133</sup> Willibrord's influences were many and varied, and his career should not be reduced to a representation of any one alone.

For the other Anglo-Saxons who left Britain in the eighth century it is even more difficult to detect direct Irish influence. Boniface was said to have met some itinerant Irish priests in his youth who 'adissent, sicut illis regionibus moris est' but, as we have seen, saints' Lives are often bad indicators of individuals' motivations.<sup>134</sup> One might imagine mixed influences: Aldhelm of Malmesbury, an inspiration to Boniface on many levels, may have received some Irish education but was also a keen supporter of Wilfrid's circle.<sup>135</sup> Boniface was notorious late in his life for clashing with Irish ideals, or at least those of the Irishman Virgil of Salzburg, but did also promote the cult of the Irish martyr St Kilian (d. 689) in Würzburg.<sup>136</sup> Away from Boniface, there is no good evidence that Lull, Burchard, Willibald, or Wynnebald ever visited Ireland or were directly influenced by Irishmen. The case of Willibrord and Ireland seems to be an exception rather than a rule, despite its prominence in modern historiography on the missions. Although Irish ideals might have had some residual influence on the Anglo-Saxon missions, the perception of a break from the *patria* is unlikely to have been conceived in terms precisely similar to or derived from those of Columbanus or Columba.

It was of course not just men who left Britain to live in Germany but rather, as Rudolf of Fulda reminds us, religious people of each sex.<sup>137</sup> Problems arose because

<sup>132</sup> Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish*. I think van Berkum overstated the case for disassociating Willibrord and Wilfrid.

<sup>133</sup> On Willibrord's landowning, see Costambeys, 'An Aristocratic Community'; Theuvs, 'Landed Property and Manorial Organisation'; and below pp. 91–92 and 107–08.

<sup>134</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 1: 'had come in accordance with the custom of their region'.

<sup>135</sup> *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. by Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 6–7. Aldhelm, *Epistolae*, ed. by Rudolf Ehwald, MGH AA, 15 (Berlin, 1919), nos 4 and 12.

<sup>136</sup> On the cultural differences between Boniface and Virgil, see Heinz Löwe, 'Ein literarischer Widersacher des Bonifatius: Virgil von Salzburg und die Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1951*, 11 (Wiesbaden, 1952), 903–83; Ó'Neill, 'Bonifaz und Virgil'.

<sup>137</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, cc. 9–10.

it was frowned on for women to travel long distances.<sup>138</sup> Abbess Eangyth, one of Boniface's early correspondents in England, expressed the desire to travel to Rome for the good of her soul, but also noted that there were many who would disapprove of her actions because they would contravene certain canons.<sup>139</sup> From her letter and a reply from Boniface, she does not appear to have been alone in her desires.<sup>140</sup> Boniface appears to have been hesitantly sympathetic, and Dagmar Schneider has shown that Boniface used more positive language when discussing women going on pilgrimage in his letters to trusted female correspondents than when he wrote about the issue didactically.<sup>141</sup> Trust was a key issue. With the passing of time, he came to encourage Archbishop Cuthberht of Canterbury not to allow matrons (*mulierae*) and veiled women (*velatae feminae*) to visit Rome 'quia magna ex parte pereunt [et] paucis remanentibus integris'.<sup>142</sup> Worse still, Boniface continued, this disgraced the whole English Church.<sup>143</sup> Boniface still enlisted the services of the Englishwomen Leoba, Tecla, Cynehilda, Beortgyth, Cynetrueth, and Walburga in Germany to ensure a group of trusted nuns and scribes were to hand.<sup>144</sup> Pragmatism and idealism could be recombined as necessary to ensure the success of the missions.

### Peregrinatio in Anglo-Saxon Missionary vitae

It is in the realms of hagiography that the Irish model of *peregrinatio* was most clearly imposed on the Anglo-Saxon missions. In this, the situation is analogous to Columbanus and Jonas, with real spiritual travels crafted into a saintly ideal. In the key missionary *vitae*, travel is defined as a break from the family and homeland. In

<sup>138</sup> Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon Women', pp. 227–34.

<sup>139</sup> Eangyth, *Die Briefe*, no. 14.

<sup>140</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 27.

<sup>141</sup> Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon Women', pp. 232–33.

<sup>142</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 78: 'because a great part of them perish and few keep their virtue'. Cuthberht does not, however, appear to have followed Boniface's advice: see Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650–c. 850* (Leicester, 1995), p. 105.

<sup>143</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 78, 'Quod scandalum est et turpitudine totius aecclesiae vestrae.' That this is a specifically English *aecclesiae* is denoted by the description of the fallen women as 'adultera vel meretrix generis Anglorum'.

<sup>144</sup> This list is given in Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii*, I. 25. Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women*, vol. 1: *The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 21–26; Hen, 'Milites Christi utriusque sexus'; Rosamond McKitterick, 'Nuns' Scriptoria in England and Francia in the Eighth Century', *Francia*, 19 (1989), 1–35.

the *Vita Bonifatii*, Boniface's decision to leave Britain for Frisia in 716 is described as follows:

Sed quia mens etiam Deo dedicata favoribus non adtollitur, humanis nec laudibus sublevatur, coeperat ad alia multa sollicitudinis cura adtentius properare et parentum adfiniumque suorum consortia devitare et peregrina magis quam paternae hereditatis terrarum loca desiderare. Sed cum sic longo temporis intervallo secum sollertissime deliberaret, ut patriam parentesque desereret, tandem, arrepto beatae memoriae et praedicti patris consultu cuncta animi sui secreta intra conscientiam ante ea abscontia patenter aperuit et magna precuum instantia ad consensum suae voluntatis sancti viri animum provocavit.<sup>145</sup>

This passage clearly contains the conventional formula for ascetic *peregrinatio* with the shunning of the homeland and kin, and the use of the word *peregrina* (all underlined).<sup>146</sup> However, Boniface did not forsake his kinship group and, as we shall see below, actively encouraged them to join him on the continent. Moreover, Willibald indicates that the vow could be suspended. As the story proceeds, Boniface discovers that Frisia is in the midst of political torment and thus returns to the monastery he had 'forsaken' for two years.<sup>147</sup> Here there is a clear contrast with the behaviour of Columbanus, who desired never to return home under any circumstances. And this is all before one even considers the artistic construction of the chapter, awash with Aldhelmian alliteration and other underlying structures.<sup>148</sup> The Irish *topos* and complex composition meant something to Willibald and possibly even to his audience, imposing a framework on the Bonifatian past that seems out of step with the letters.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 4: 'But because a mind intent on God is not elated nor dependent upon the praise and approbation of man, [Boniface] began carefully and cautiously to turn his mind to other things, to shun the company of his relatives and acquaintances, and to set his heart not on remaining in his native land but on foreign travel. After long deliberation on the question of forsaking his country and his relatives, he took the counsel [of Abbot Winbert] of blessed memory, and frankly disclosed to him the plans that up to that moment he had carefully concealed. He importuned the holy man with loud and urgent requests to give his consent to the project.'

<sup>146</sup> Angenendt, 'Die irische Peregrinatio', pp. 65–66; Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*, pp. 69–70; von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 61–62.

<sup>147</sup> Willibald, *VB*, cc. 4–5.

<sup>148</sup> The alliteration works throughout the passage, sometimes consolidating phrases (*secum sollertissime, patriam parentesque, sui secreta*, etc.), sometimes working poetically between sense units (e.g. the verbs *devitare* – *desiderare* – *deliberare* – *deserere*). A further structure of note is the two opening sub-clauses of each sentence being composed of 9 + 4 words.

<sup>149</sup> This does not mean we have to lose Boniface as such; White, *Content of the Form*, p. 57: 'one can produce an imaginary discourse about real events that may not be less "true" for being



Why Willibald would have wanted to recast Boniface as an Irish-style *peregrinus* is by no means clear. Irish asceticism and Columbanian monasticism had left a deep cultural legacy in the Frankish territories, which might in itself provide a partial answer. There were, however, other models of sanctity Willibald could have employed, from St Anthony and St Martin to the politically active saints so popular in Merovingian hagiography. Willibald himself cited the non-hagiographical works of Eusebius, Hegessipus, and Gregory the Great as his models;<sup>150</sup> by contrast, there is no indication that he had read any insular or Columbanian texts. The reception of the *Vita Bonifatii*, on the other hand, suggests it quickly found its way into the circle of Virgil of Salzburg, an apparently genuine Irish *peregrinus pro Christi* sent by Pippin to create order in Bavaria.<sup>151</sup> Ian Wood has demonstrated that Virgil's friend Arbeo of Freising tailored his portrayals of St Corbinian and St Emmeram in part as a riposte to Willibald's image of Boniface bringing order to the Bavarian Church.<sup>152</sup> Virgil, meanwhile, was close enough to Lull and Willibald of Eichstätt to remember them in the Salzburg *Necrologica*, even if he was not always on the best of terms with Boniface himself.<sup>153</sup> One could easily imagine Willibald playing to the expectations of sanctity created by Irish and Columbanian monastic influence.

Evidence for this kind of influence on audiences can be found if one looks at the hagiographical traditions of Würzburg and St Gall. The author of the *Passio minor Kiliani* in Würzburg drew on the works of both Willibald and Arbeo in shaping his saint.<sup>154</sup> Kilian was portrayed as a classic Irish *peregrinus* (although the word is never used) who forsook ('relinquere') his family and homeland, but who also fought for standards literally derived from Boniface's letters.<sup>155</sup> His death at the

imaginary. It depends upon how one construes the function of the faculty of imagination in human nature'. It is the discrepancies between epistolary and hagiographical evidence which are more destabilizing.

<sup>150</sup> Willibald, *VB*, pref.

<sup>151</sup> *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* c. 2, ed. and trans. by Herwig Wolfram, *Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum: Das Weissbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die Erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien* (Vienna, 1979), c. 2.

<sup>152</sup> Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 305–09; Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 157–58; Willibald, *VB*, c. 7.

<sup>153</sup> *Monumenta necrologica monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis*, ed. by Sigismund Herzberg-Fränkell, MGH *Necrologia Germaniae*, 2 (Berlin, 1904), pp. 3–64 (p. 26). On the disputes between Boniface and Virgil, see *Die Briefe*, nos 68 and 80.

<sup>154</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 161.

<sup>155</sup> *Passio minor Kiliani*, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM, 5 (Hannover, 1910), c. 2.

hands of an assassin imitated Boniface's death-scene in the *Vita Bonifatii*, both martyrs drawing on the same biblical quotations to rally the spirits of their 'socius'.<sup>156</sup> A fuller account of Kilian's life was written in the tenth century, reorientating the saint's values.<sup>157</sup> Now, Kilian's travels were presented as a direct parallel to Columbanian enterprises, providing the 'Teutons' of Thuringia with a saint to match Columbanus in Italy or Gallus in Alemannia.<sup>158</sup> The change in emphasis was not a move against anything anyone perceived to be 'Bonifatian'. The author of the extended *Passio Kiliani* still ended by referring to Boniface's role in the cult before directing readers to the *Vita Burchardi*, which the author also wrote.<sup>159</sup> Meanwhile an interest in Boniface had already developed at the monastery of St Gall in Alemannia. In the 850s the monk Ermenrich wrote from Fulda to his teacher Abbot Grimold in St Gall, mentioning the spiritual influence of Columbanus and Gallus — 'de illo angulo terrarum'! — and Boniface in the same breath.<sup>160</sup> The monastery of St Gall and its close ally Reichenau, founded by Pirmin in 724, were responsible for two extant ninth-century manuscripts of the *Vita Bonifatii*, which they treated on a par with the lives of St Jerome and Ambrose of Milan.<sup>161</sup> Boniface's career formed part of the *vita patrum* and, in the unity of the saintly life, different lived traditions could be rendered meaningless.

In hagiography St Willibrord was also portrayed as an Irish-style *peregrinus*. Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* contains a passage describing Willibrord's decision to leave his Northumbrian *patria* that, like the *Vita Bonifatii*, contains elements similar to Irish *peregrinatio*. To what extent this image may have been derived from the 'lost' Irish *vita* one can only guess.<sup>162</sup> The text reads:

<sup>156</sup> *Passio minor Kiliani*, c. 10; Willibald, *VB*, c. 8.

<sup>157</sup> Goetz, 'Die Viten des hl. Kilian'.

<sup>158</sup> *Passio maior Kiliani*, ed. by Henri Casinius, AASS, Jul. II (Brussels, 1728) c. 2 (c. 1) and c. 6 (c. 5).

<sup>159</sup> *Passio maior Kiliani*, c. 23 (c. 22). On the manuscripts, many of which preserve the two texts together, see Barlava, *Die Lebensschreibungen Bischof Burchards von Würzburg*, pp. 29–48.

<sup>160</sup> Ermenrich of Ellwangen, *Epistola ad Grimaldam*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Epp., 5 (Berlin, 1899), pp. 536–79 (p. 576).

<sup>161</sup> The two copies of the *Vita Bonifatii* are St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 552 and Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 136 (both ninth-century: Levison, MGH SRG, 57, p. xix and p. xxiii). A further copy is mentioned in a ninth-century library catalogue, St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 728, p. 15, where it is listed as part of the *vita patrum*.

<sup>162</sup> Thiotfrid, *Vita Willibrordi*, c. 24.

Et quia in Hibernia scolasticam eruditionem viguisse audivit, etiam et quorundam sanctorum virorum, fama narrante conversatione incitatus et praecipuae beatissimi patris et episcopi Ecgbercti [...] necnon et Wictbercti venerabilis viri et sacerdotis Dei, quorum uterque ob caelestis patriae amorem domo, patria cognationeque relictā, Hiberniam secessit, ibique dulcissimos supernae contemplationis fructus, saeculo nudus, Deo plenus, solitaria cotidie hauriebat conversatione: horum beatus adolescens emulari cupiens relegendem.<sup>163</sup>

Again the ideas of forsaking *patria* and kin are clearly expressed (underlined), although that clause specifically relates to Ecgberht and Wictberht; it is clear, however, that within the narrative this was the lifestyle that Willibrord wanted to adopt. Whether this was really the case is unclear, as was discussed above, and we are not helped by the silence of Bede — the principal source for Willibrord — on the reasons why Willibrord left Northumbria. There is no mention of *peregrinatio* at all in relation to Willibrord's later journey to the continent. Instead Alcuin presented Willibrord as following the apostolic decree (Matt. 28. 19), which he illustrated by describing Willibrord as thirty-three years old — the age Jesus made the decree — and having eleven companions, making them twelve apostles.<sup>164</sup> Alcuin presented the journey as a new start for Willibrord and his companions and it does not appear, at least in the *Vita Willibrordi*, that a specifically Irish *peregrinatio* was at the heart of Alcuin's model of Willibrord's mission.

Alcuin's own perception of what constituted *peregrinatio* would not necessarily conform to what many historians would recognize as the classic Irish model. In 789 Alcuin wrote a letter to a Northumbrian friend who was working in the Saxon mission field, enquiring about the successes of the mission.<sup>165</sup> At that time Alcuin was working at the court of Charlemagne, in principle making both him and his friend *peregrini*. Yet he wrote, 'utinam videam eum, et sit cursus vitae meae consummatus

<sup>163</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 4: 'And because he [Willibrord] had heard that schools and learning flourished in Ireland, he was encouraged further by what he was told of the manner of life adopted there by certain holy men, particularly by the blessed Bishop Ecgberht [...] and by Wictberht, the venerable servant and priest of God, both of whom, for love of Christ, forsook home, fatherland, and family and retired to Ireland, where, cut off from the world though close to God, they lived as solitaries enjoying the blessings of heavenly contemplation. The blessed youth wished to imitate the godly life of these men.'

<sup>164</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 5. See also Bede, *HE*, V. 10, where the imagery is less explicit. Jonas also described Columbanus as having twelve companions (*Vita Columbani*, c. 4), but it is important to note the difference that Alcuin did not describe Willibrord and his companions as *peregrini* with similar motivations. For an attempt to identify the twelve, see G. N. M. Vis, 'De twaalf gezellen van Willibrord', in *Willibrord*, ed. by Bange and Weiler, pp. 128–48.

<sup>165</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 6.

in peregrinatione!’, which suggests that Alcuin did not think that the mere act of having left his homeland classified him as a *peregrinus*.<sup>166</sup> Alcuin appears to have thought there was something more specifically pious attached to the concept of *peregrinatio* beyond the leaving of the homeland to live the religious life. Given that his purpose in writing was to find out about the conversion of the Saxons, Danes, Wiltzes, and Wends, Alcuin can only have meant that *peregrinatio* should be equated with mission. This is a different definition from that implied in the *Vita Willibrordi*, but there is no need to maintain that Alcuin was always consistent, especially if in the *Vita* he was reworking an earlier Irish work for a variety of edificatory purposes.<sup>167</sup> The contradiction does, on the other hand, help to establish the literary artifices employed in Alcuin’s account of Willibrord’s career.

Hygeburg’s hagiographical doublet *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, meanwhile, presents us with another formulation of *peregrinatio* as the two saints are described embarking on a more traditional pilgrimage, at first to Rome but then with Willibald continuing on to the Holy Land.<sup>168</sup> Hygeburg suggested that Willibald was motivated as much by curiosity as by spiritual yearnings.<sup>169</sup> Moreover her convoluted Latin also created a level of hyperbole surrounding her descriptions of Willibald’s motives; she wrote, for example, that Willibald ‘maioram iam tunc peregrinationis ignotitiam adire optabat, quam illa fuit, in qua tunc stare videbatur’, when describing his decision to leave ‘unknown’ Rome for ‘more remote’ Jerusalem.<sup>170</sup> Wynnebald, meanwhile, was said to have returned home after seven years in Italy to encourage people to support the German missions;<sup>171</sup> there were clearly no echoes of Jonas’s *peregrini* refusing to return home. Ultimately, in Hygeburg’s work, there is little clear or consistent account of precisely what *peregrinatio* meant beyond wandering around with some (if not just any) religious purpose.

Other authors of Anglo-Saxon missionary *vitae* included different motivations for saints or less precise formulations of the Irish *peregrinatio* ideal. The *Vita*

<sup>166</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 6: ‘if only I could see Him, and He might employ my accursed life in *peregrinatio*!’.

<sup>167</sup> See p. 31 above on Alcuin’s lost Irish source for Willibrord.

<sup>168</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, cc. 3–4. Odilo Engels, ‘Die Vita Willibaldi und die Anfänge des Bistums Eichstätt’, in *Der Heilige Willibald*, ed. by Dickerhof, Reiter, and Weinfurter, pp. 171–98 (pp. 175–78). See below, Chapter 7.

<sup>169</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 3. See Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, p. 45.

<sup>170</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4: ‘longed to go on pilgrimage to a more unknown place than where he then was’.

<sup>171</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 3.

*Burchardi posterior* described Burchard's break with Britain as *peregrinatio* and Boniface and his circle as *peregrini* but does not elaborate.<sup>172</sup> The rhetoric of *peregrinatio* had become a mere trope. The distorted account of Boniface's life in Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* is littered with epithets like *athleta Dei peregrinus*, but Liudger uses so many different ones that they appear to be more the author's playful stylings than attempts to ascribe some kind of reality.<sup>173</sup> At the same time, when Liudger described Boniface's parting from his homeland he merely stated that Boniface *veniebat* to the kingdom of the Franks;<sup>174</sup> there is no indication of anything other than a physical change in Boniface's relationship to his homeland. *Peregrinatio* was not essential to the portrayal of the saintly life as distance from the missions themselves grew.

### *Family and Social Networks*

An important difference between Irish *peregrinatio* and the Anglo-Saxon missions lay in the attitude towards family. Irish ascetics, as we have seen, would specifically forsake their kin in order to follow the precepts articulated in Genesis and the Gospel of Luke and take a step closer to their heavenly home. The Anglo-Saxons always retained a strong sense of family, as studies by Lutz von Padberg and Rosamond McKitterick have shown.<sup>175</sup> Lull and Willibald both initially left Britain with their own kin when they travelled on pilgrimage to Rome.<sup>176</sup> On the continent, Anglo-Saxons established family monasteries such as Echternach near Trier and Heidenheim near Eichstätt. Control of these would pass from family member to family member. In the case of Echternach, for example, the monastery was governed successively by the relatives of Willibrord, Aldberct, and Beornrad, whose

<sup>172</sup> *VBurch*, c. 2: 'tandem relicta Britannia peregrinationis obtentu, in quendam Galliae partem transacto salo pervenit, ibique tamdiu sub habitu peregrini delituit, quoad, audita fama egregii praesulis Bonifacii, incenderetur ardore visendi pontificem santitatis fama vulgatum'.

<sup>173</sup> In Liudger's *VG*, c. 2 alone Liudger describes Boniface using combinations of the words *athleta Dei*, *peregrinus*, *electus Dei martyr*, *viator*, *doctor*, *magister*, *futurus martyr*, *fama magister*, *profectus*, *pastor*, and *sanctus* without straight repetition.

<sup>174</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 1.

<sup>175</sup> Von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*; McKitterick, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*. See also discussion in Stefan Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Winfrid-Bonifatius und seines Umfeldes*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhochdeutschen Kirchengeschichte, 79 (Mainz, 1996).

<sup>176</sup> Lull, Denchard, and Burchard, *Die Briefe*, no. 49; Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 3.

combined abbeys covered the first century of the monastery's existence.<sup>177</sup> Heidenheim, meanwhile, was a double monastery established by the siblings Wynnebald and Waldburga near their brother Willibald's foundation of Eichstätt.<sup>178</sup> It is likely that many Anglo-Saxons from within the same kinship groups travelled to the continent specifically because other members had already made the journey and for no other reason.

The majority of women who travelled to work in Germany appear to have been related to principal members of Boniface's circle. At Kitzingen Cynhilda was, according to Otloh's eleventh-century *Vita Bonifatii*, Lull's maternal aunt, while Beortgyth was her daughter and thus Lull's cousin.<sup>179</sup> Otloh may not be the best witness to these bonds, but it does at least attest to the development of perceptions of the Anglo-Saxons as family-orientated. Walburga, Willibald, and Wynnebald, meanwhile, were siblings, and may have been related to Boniface.<sup>180</sup> Abbess Leoba of Tauberbischofsheim was another relative, as Boniface had an unspecified blood tie with her mother, Æbbe.<sup>181</sup> In Rudolf's telling of events at least, the ties between Boniface and Leoba were so strong that Boniface was said to have insisted that Leoba be buried by his side in Fulda, although in the event the Fulda monks were too uncomfortable with the idea to carry the request through.<sup>182</sup> Beortgyth, meanwhile, wrote a somewhat melodramatic letter to her brother Baldhart in England imploring him to visit.<sup>183</sup> It was not just powerful bishops who could exert the influence to re-establish ties across the sea. The presence of the female religious in the Bonifatian mission emphasizes again how important the ties of community and family were to Boniface and his circle, and goes some way to explaining why these women travelled despite the apprehension of many male clergy.

It was not just family networks that were preserved by the Anglo-Saxon travellers, but also ecclesiastical and political networks.<sup>184</sup> Through these networks

<sup>177</sup> Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', pp. 97–98.

<sup>178</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 13; Wolfhard, *Miracula s. Waldburgae*, ed. by Oswald Holdger-Egger, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), c. 1.

<sup>179</sup> Otloh, *Vita Bonifatii*, I. 25.

<sup>180</sup> Wolfhard, *Miracula s. Waldburgae*, c. 1.

<sup>181</sup> Leoba, *Die Briefe*, no. 29.

<sup>182</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 21.

<sup>183</sup> Beortgyth, *Die Briefe*, no. 148. On the letter, see Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources', pp. 36–38.

<sup>184</sup> For non-family networks, see again McKitterick, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*; Schipperges, *Bonifatius et socii eius*; von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 75–80.

Boniface and his circle became something of a focal point for trade, or at least the procurement of particular items. King Æthelberht II of Kent, for example, sent a silver, gold-lined drinking cup and two woollen cloaks to Boniface in the hope that he, in return, would send the King some hunting falcons.<sup>185</sup> Whether Boniface responded to Æthelberht is unknown, but he did send a hawk, two falcons, two shields, and two lances to King Æthelbald of Mercia.<sup>186</sup> Even when Boniface first arrived in Frisia, his friend Bugga was quick to send him books, money, and an altar cloth to help him in his new church.<sup>187</sup> There also appears to have been an unusual preoccupation with the sending of towels as gifts, particularly ones intended to dry feet.<sup>188</sup> Boniface's preservation of his English networks was not, it seems, entirely ascetic, but often rather involved the exchange of luxury items and other forms of help. Lull, Burchard, and Denehard, similarly, sent spices back to Inkberrow, their alma mater.<sup>189</sup> Medieval gift-exchange reinforced the bonds between the senders and recipients, brought added support for missionary enterprises, and ultimately promoted the mission.<sup>190</sup> The Northumbrian court of Alchred (765–74) sent letters of support, cloaks, and a gold ring and entered a confraternal relationship with the circle of Lull of Mainz; from the same court came missionaries such as Willehad and Aluberht.<sup>191</sup> These networks thus played an important role in perpetuating the missionary enterprises.

Despite the ideals of *peregrinatio*, social and political ties also provided the motivation for many Anglo-Saxons to return to their homelands. Lull and Burchard spoke of returning to Inkberrow but never seem to have got round to it.<sup>192</sup> Suidberht of Kaiserwerth returned to Britain to be ordained bishop by Wilfrid rather

<sup>185</sup> Aethelbert II, *Die Briefe*, no. 105.

<sup>186</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 69.

<sup>187</sup> Bugga, *Die Briefe*, no. 15.

<sup>188</sup> *Die Briefe*, nos 32, 63, 75: 'vollosam ad tergendos pedes'. The priest Hygelac also sent Lull *una mappa* amongst other gifts (*Die Briefe*, no. 72), while Cardinal Benedict sent Boniface 'sabanus unus et facitergius unus' (*Die Briefe*, no. 90), thus expanding Boniface's range of towels.

<sup>189</sup> Lull, Denehard, and Burchard, *Die Briefe*, no. 49: 'Parva quoque munusculorum transmissio scedulam istam comitatur quae sunt tria, id est turis et piperis et cinnamomi permodia zenia, sed omni mentis affectione destinata' — in other words frankincense, pepper, and cinnamon.

<sup>190</sup> See the 1925 essay Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Gift Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (London, 1990).

<sup>191</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull, pp. 271–72.

<sup>192</sup> Lull, Denehard, and Burchard, *Die Briefe*, no. 49: 'si cui nostrum contingit huius Britannicae telluris sceptrum visitare'.



than seek Frankish ecclesiastical support, just as did Aluberht later on.<sup>193</sup> People might return home as messengers, as Eoba did when he took a letter from Boniface to Eadburga of Thanet.<sup>194</sup> One priest, Wigbert, returned home sometime during Lull's episcopate and was persuaded by his *amici et propinqui* to remain there.<sup>195</sup> He had, however, played a useful role in promoting the missions by making sure everyone had heard of Lull's work abroad.<sup>196</sup> There was, it seems, little sense of *peregrinatio* as a permanent state of affairs. What mattered was the preservation of social and political networks, both for the emotional well-being of the missionary communities and for the accumulation of resources to help further their causes.

### Conclusion

The traditional twin-explanation of the Anglo-Saxon missions — *peregrinatio* and the desire to convert continental Germanic kin — can no longer be seen as an adequate shorthand. Attempts to fit the evidence within such a simple breakdown of the Anglo-Saxons' motivations fail to do justice to the variety of ideals expressed by the letters and saints' Lives; they also run the risk of conflating ideas that actually resulted in different kinds of behaviour. *Peregrinatio*, in particular, has to be recognized as being as much to do with a literary construction of piety as it is to do with personal motivations. The writing of hagiography provided a useful strategy which helped fulfil the need to establish special figures from the recent past as saints in the present. Through reinterpretations of the Anglo-Saxons' travels to the continent, the ground was established to justify the new saints as figures worthy of veneration from the perspective of groups with different expectations of what made a saint in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Fundamental to the Anglo-Saxons' work was the perception of various communities: *gentes Germanorum*, churches, families, and social networks. Belonging to these groups gave individuals a sense of purpose and access to the spiritual and earthly resources possible to perform the roles they chose. The creation of new Christian communities in Northern Europe was strongly built upon the extension of in-groups and the negotiation of differences between groups. Geography played

<sup>193</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 11.

<sup>194</sup> Eadburga, *Die Briefe*, nos 35, 60.

<sup>195</sup> Wigbert, *Die Briefe*, nos 137–38.

<sup>196</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull, p. 271.

its part here too: the focus on *Germania* provided a stable physical context in which the missions could play out, while the maintenance of social and institutional ties helped to negate the emotional and material problems caused by the distances involved. As identities and associations shifted over time, so too did the logic of reported motivations.

## KINGS AND NOBLES

The successes of the 'Anglo-Saxon missions' rested on their interaction with the political and social worlds of the Franks and their neighbours. Patronage and the accumulation of wealth meant that many Anglo-Saxons became part of the rich networks of political and family affiliations in the North. There was often a happy coincidence of benefits to be had by missionaries and secular leaders who worked together, as Church and government could be mutually strengthened.<sup>1</sup> The complexities of Frankish politics meant that little could be assured, but successive generations of Anglo-Saxons found their work driven forward by association with the growing power of the Carolingians.<sup>2</sup> Willibrord, Boniface, and Alcuin each found himself involved on some level with key moments like Charles Martel securing the mayoral title in 716, Pippin III's royal coronation in 751, and Charlemagne's imperial coronation on Christmas Day 800. Not everybody who lent their support to the Anglo-Saxons enjoyed such relentless good fortune, however, and it was integral to the development of the missions and their reputation that they were formed through a number of clashes and discourses, not all of which saw the missionaries championing the Carolingians. This chapter will look at the different sources of support for the missions and examine some of the ways in which they were commemorated.

Great tension was caused by the potential conflicts between living a pious life and engagement in secular politics. Boniface lamented to Daniel of Winchester that he needed Charles Martel's *mandatum* to effect his programmes for change and that

<sup>1</sup> Von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 95–102.

<sup>2</sup> Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*; Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*; Regine Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VI<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup>): essai d'anthropologie sociale* (Paris, 1995).

visiting Charles meant unavoidable contact with ‘false priests and hypocrites’.<sup>3</sup> The *aula* or *palatium* of the Franks was historically no stranger to holy men, as the careers of Columbanus (d. 615) and Audoin (d. early 680s) show.<sup>4</sup> The court was the kingdom in miniature and religion was an integral part of it, from the bishops and monks who attended to the chapels constructed as part of its physical fabric.<sup>5</sup> It also served as a powerful public forum for conflict. Boniface’s comments to Daniel suggest that he preferred to avoid direct confrontation, but Liudger — albeit writing much later — thought of Boniface and Gregory of Utrecht preaching at court and surviving the jealousy of the *pseudodoctores et adulatores* they encountered.<sup>6</sup> The age of Charles Martel was once considered to be a time when the Church suffered secularization, with the despoliation of church goods under the dominion of bishops more aristocratic than pious.<sup>7</sup> While it is a view of this period that no longer holds sway among modern historians, it remains clear that the Bonifatian letters and *vitae* styled the missions as a challenge to the imagined prevailing (lack of) order.<sup>8</sup> Boniface’s complicity with the Frankish authorities in such contexts, Stuart Airlie has argued, allowed him to be seen as one of the architects of the Carolingian Empire.<sup>9</sup> It is an important example of the close relationship between the secular and the holy.

Sanctity and aristocratic networks had long been bound together.<sup>10</sup> Merovingian Gaul developed its own *Adelsheiligkeit*, with the adoption of saintly ideals

<sup>3</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 63. Angenendt, ‘Pirmin und Bonifatius’, pp. 283–84.

<sup>4</sup> On Irish holy men in this context, see Enright, ‘*Iromanie – Irophobie* Revisited’. On Audoin, see Paul Fouracre and Richard Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640–720* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 133–52, esp. p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> Stuart Airlie, ‘The Palace of Memory: The Carolingian Court as Political Centre’, in *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Sarah Rees Jones, Richard Marks, and A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 1–20. See also the essays in *Court Culture in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Catherine Cubitt, SEM, 2 (Turnhout, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Liudger, *VG*, cc. 3–4.

<sup>7</sup> Brunner, ‘Der Reiterdienst und die Anfänge’. The seminal modern study of Frankish opposition to Boniface remains Eugen Ewig, ‘Milo et eiusmodi simili’, in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 412–40.

<sup>8</sup> Reuter, ‘“Kirchenreform” und “Kirchenpolitik”’, pp. 35–51; Dierkens, ‘“Carolus monasteriorum”?’, pp. 290–93; Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, esp. pp. 121–37. For a more general account see also von Padberg, *Bonifatius*, esp. pp. 71–74.

<sup>9</sup> Stuart Airlie, ‘The Frankish Aristocracy as Supporters and Opponents of Boniface’, in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Franz Felten (forthcoming). My thanks to Dr Airlie for allowing me to see a version of this paper in advance of publication.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, *Cults of the Saints*.

within Frankish society.<sup>11</sup> The sources seem to suggest an increasing interest in saintly characters of noble stock in the seventh century.<sup>12</sup> Famed holy men like Audoin were potent figures both because of their piety and because of the resources they were able to mobilize as members of the aristocracy. This did not necessarily make Audoin an *Adelheilige*: his sanctity was defined by widely recognized standards of religiosity, not by any specifically aristocratic characteristic.<sup>13</sup> Saints reflected the social structures which created them, in the process establishing a certain harmony between two values systems — the saintly and the aristocratic — we might a priori imagine to be opposed.<sup>14</sup> An outsider might have been disadvantaged in some respects for coming from outside this harmonized (although not harmonious) cultural discourse, arriving with little of the political or material clout to change the values of society. In part, as Arnold Angenendt and others have shown, the success of the Anglo-Saxons owes much to the way that they could turn their status into an advantage and become an effective part of the secular world around them.<sup>15</sup>

This chapter loosely follows the interaction and expansion of different families and networks in the Frankish realm, starting centrally with the Pippinids and moving outwards. It is organized geographically although, as we shall see, few groups were restricted by their principal territory (seen, for example, in the cooperation between the nobility of Trier and Utrecht, or Suidger's holding of land in Hesse and Bavaria). A defining feature of many of the Anglo-Saxons' social networks is that they evolved in the context of Frankish expansion. Frisia was conquered in the 690s and 720s, Thuringia was absorbed sometime after 717, Bavaria was often involved in Frankish politics before it was finally annexed in 787–88, and Saxony

<sup>11</sup> Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 489–93.

<sup>12</sup> Karl Bosl, 'Der "Adelheiligen": Idealtypus und Wirklichkeit, Gesellschaft und Kultur im merowingerzeitlichen Bayern des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts. Gesellschaftliche Beiträge zu den Viten der bayerischen Stammesheiligen Emmeram, Rupert, Korbinian', in *Speculum Historiale: Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung*, ed. by Clemens Bauer, Laetitia Boehm, and Max Müller (Freiburg, 1965), pp. 167–87; Paul Fouracre, 'The Origins of the Carolingian Attempt to Regulate the Cult of Saints', in *Cult of Saints*, ed. by Howard-Johnston and Hayward, pp. 143–65. On later developments along the same line, see Poulin, *L'idéal de sainteté*, pp. 33–51.

<sup>13</sup> For similar comments on Alemannic saints, see František Graus, 'Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Hagiographie der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit: Der Viten der Heiligen der südalemannischen Raumes und die sogenannten Adelsheiligen', in *Mönchtum, Episkopat und Adel*, ed. by Borst, pp. 131–76 (pp. 159–76).

<sup>14</sup> Poulin, *L'idéal de sainteté*, pp. 125–31.

<sup>15</sup> Angenendt, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius'.

was famously the subject of thirty-three years of intermittent military attention (772–804). In most cases, however, Frankish expansion was secondary (at least chronologically) to Anglo-Saxon interaction with different groups.

### *The Pippinids/Carolingians*

Anglo-Saxon missionaries enjoyed particular success through their relationships with the Pippinids, later known as the Carolingians. As a pre-eminent Austrasian family at first and later rulers over the Franks, the Pippinids were among the most powerful patrons it was possible to have in the targeted territories. They had first appeared on the political scene in the early seventh century and had long dominated the position of *maior palatii* — the king's chief administrator — in the eastern Frankish territories.<sup>16</sup> Contact with the Anglo-Saxons is first evident in the early activities of Wilfrid. In c. 674 the Archbishop of York had assisted Austrasian Franks to return the young King Dagobert II (r. 676–79) from Ireland to assume the throne.<sup>17</sup> The royal child had been sent into exile ('peregrinandum') by the Austrasian *maior* Grimoald — an early Pippinid — on the death of King Sigibert III (d. 651) so that he could seize the throne for his own son, Childebert (d. 658).<sup>18</sup> Grimoald and Childebert were arrested and killed by the Neustrians under King Clovis II (d. 658), but there is no evidence that anyone tried to bring Dagobert II back home until the deaths in quick succession of Childeric II (d. 675) and Clovis III (d. 676) left a vacuum in the east which the Austrasian nobility were eager the Neustrians should not fill. The new King proved to be greatly unpopular, however, and was murdered in 679; and for his role in retrieving Dagobert, Wilfrid was threatened with imprisonment.<sup>19</sup> It was an inauspicious start to cooperation

<sup>16</sup> For a brief account of the Pippinids' origins, see Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 33–40.

<sup>17</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, c. 28. See Jean-Michel Picard, 'Church and Politics in the Seventh Century: The Irish Exile of Dagobert II', in *Ireland and Northern France 600–850* (Dublin, 1991), pp. 65–90.

<sup>18</sup> *Liber historiae Francorum*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM, 2 (Hannover, 1888), c. 43. On the dating, see Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, pp. 50–66. On Grimoald's coup, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 222–24; Matthias Becher, 'Der sogenannte Staatsstreich Grimoalds: Versuch einer Neubeurteilung', in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 119–47.

<sup>19</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, c. 33. Suspiciously the threat is made by the Neustrians, which might be indicative of Stephanus's ignorance regarding whatever had happened.

between the Northumbrian and Austrasian circles which would begin working together so harmoniously a decade later.

Willibrord benefited greatly from the patronage of Pippin II and his family from his arrival in 690.<sup>20</sup> His monastery at Echternach had been the property of the family of Irmina of Oeren, whose daughter Plectrudis was the wife of Pippin II and a benefactor of Willibrord's.<sup>21</sup> This placed the Anglo-Saxon at an important meeting of two powerful Frankish families. His timing was crucial: he arrived to work in Frisia just at a point in the 690s when Pippin II was developing ambitions in the region, so there were good grounds for an alliance from the beginning. In 706 Willibrord also swore an oath of fidelity to Pippin and Plectrudis in exchange for their protection, their *defensio et mundeburdium*.<sup>22</sup> We should be wary of interpreting this relationship as *vassalisch*, which would impose an all-too-well defined feudalism onto the situation. Instead one may see the institutionalization of the *fratres peregrini* and efforts to establish trust in a relationship in which the exchange of spiritual and material capital was considerable. It was a way of managing the tensions inherent in cooperation between the spiritual and secular, defining the rights on each side. The charters are more than reflections of aloof idealism: they are the embodiments of the real power accumulated by Willibrord. After Pippin's death, Willibrord's decision to support Charles against Plectrudis was a significant factor in establishing the new *maior* as the pre-eminent figure of Austrasian politics.<sup>23</sup> Charles made two grants to his former opponent which confirmed their working relationship and paved the way for further missionary work in Frisia.<sup>24</sup> Willibrord had become a major political player through his careful alignment of spiritual and material resources.

The Pippinids were highly regarded in the Willibrordian traditions. Bede called Pippin II 'gloriosissimus dux Francorum' and otherwise praised him for supporting

<sup>20</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 5; Alcuin, *VW*, c. 5.

<sup>21</sup> On Willibrord and Irmina, see Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 44–48. On Irmina and Plectrudis, see Werner, *Der Lütticher Raum*, pp. 167–68.

<sup>22</sup> On the significance of this clause, drawn from the formulary of Marculf, see Angenendt, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius', pp. 270–73; Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', pp. 68–76; Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, pp. 109–12.

<sup>23</sup> Richard A. Gerberding, '716: A Crucial Year for Charles Martel', in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 205–16 (pp. 212–13).

<sup>24</sup> These charters are *Diplomata maiorum domus e stirpe Arnulforum*, ed. Georg H. Pertz, MGH DD Mer., 1 (Hannover, 1872), nos 11–13.



Willibrord and taking the bodies of the martyred Hewalds to Cologne.<sup>25</sup> In Alcuin's reworking of Bede's story, Pippin is a 'vir strenuus' who received Willibrord 'cum omni honore' twice.<sup>26</sup> Once Alcuin even anachronistically referred to the territory of the *dux Francorum* as a *regnum*, which fits more generally with the Northumbrian's support for the ruling dynasty. More generally Alcuin portrayed a smooth transition between Pippin and Charles, and his comments on Willibrord at this time were largely restricted to a reference to the establishment of the see at Utrecht.<sup>27</sup> A central moment in Willibrord's dealings with the Pippinids comes when he baptizes Pippin III:

filium fortissimi Francorum ducis Carli, patrem huius nobilissimi Caroli, qui modo cum triumphis maximis et omni dignitate gloriosissime Francorum regit imperium. De quo Pippino, patre eius, idem sanctus vir praesaga voce tale coram discipulis suis praedixit vaticinium: 'Scitote, quod iste infans sublimis erit valde et gloriosus et omnium praecedentium Francorum ducibus maior.' Huius itaque vaticinii veritas nostris probata est temporibus, nec opus est testimoniis adsequi, quid totius regni agnoscit auctoritas.<sup>28</sup>

Condensing praise for three generations of the family into this chapter allowed Alcuin to inscribe Willibrord into the spiritual foundations of a secular *imperium Francorum*.<sup>29</sup> The combination of baptism and prophecy presented Willibrord as a holy man for the Carolingian court. Perhaps there are signs here of Alcuin's angst at having been dislocated from Aachen and the palace school, with him reflecting

<sup>25</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 5 and c. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 13. On the establishment of the see of Utrecht, see below pp. 159–62.

<sup>28</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 23: 'son of the most strong Charles, duke of the Franks and father of the most noble Charlemagne, who rules the empire of the Franks (*imperium Francorum*) at the present day in triumph, dignity, and glory. Of Pippin, his father, Willibrord made the following prediction in the presence of his disciples: "Know that this child will be highly exalted and renowned. He will be greater than all the kings of the Franks who have gone before him." The truth of this prophecy has been fulfilled in our times and there is no need to prove what is universally acknowledged throughout the whole kingdom.' The reference to Charlemagne is dropped in the poetic version of the text but the reference to the *imperium* is preserved: Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi Liber II*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Poetae, I (Berlin, 1884), c. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Folz, *The Coronation of Charlemagne*, trans. by J. E. Anderson (London, 1974), p. 120, notes a distinction in Alcuin's thought between these earlier 'petty "empires" founded only upon their holders' hegemony' and the imperial dignity of Charlemagne. It is fair to say Alcuin probably had models of Anglo-Saxon *imperium* in mind when writing the *VW*, but we may prefer to say that Alcuin saw a progression from these earlier political ideals, not a distinction incorporating a value judgement as such.

on the guidance he could still offer Charlemagne. There is no evidence for the veneration of Willibrord by the royal family, making the story appear more to do with how Alcuin wanted to imagine his relative's significance for the new political order.

Boniface's acceptance into the same circles carries clear parallels with Willibrord's career, but also significant differences. He was able to gain purchase, not through his holiness per se, but through recommendation. Both Daniel of Winchester and Pope Gregory II wrote letters of introduction for him which facilitated his introduction to prominent figures.<sup>30</sup> Such letters were a counterpart to more personal manifestations of patronage. In hagiography from Stephanus's *Vita Wilfridi* to Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, the reception of the missionaries is aided by the transmission of messages or direct personal recommendations.<sup>31</sup> Again a mechanism for generating trust was at work. In 722 Boniface, like Willibrord before him, was afforded Charles Martel's *defensio et mundeburdium* and given a letter explaining this which could be shown to people the missionary might encounter.<sup>32</sup> 'Personal law' — the principle that each man followed his own national law — did not come into it: what mattered was a personal patron whose word carried some weight.<sup>33</sup> Pirmin benefited from the same principles at Murbach in 728 when King Theuderic promised his *defensio et tuitio* on the recommendation of Count Eberhard.<sup>34</sup> Boniface's own followers, meanwhile, were able to benefit from his own elevated status and considered their position uncertain without him.<sup>35</sup> Charles's initial acceptance of Boniface was no doubt helped by the mayor's interest in Saxony at the time, but the example of Pirmin is testament to a more general pattern of Frankish society internalizing its pious outsiders in a variety of situations.

Over the course of the eighth century the Anglo-Saxons lent their support to key moments in the rise of the Pippinids. Most famously, Boniface and Burchard were credited with roles in Pippin's usurpation of the Frankish crown in 751. The

<sup>30</sup> Daniel, *Die Briefe*, no. 11; Gregory II, *Die Briefe*, nos 17, 19, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, cc. 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, on which see James T. Palmer, 'The Problem of Noble Bishops and Saintly Aristocrats', in *The Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy*, ed. by Alex Burghart (forthcoming). Rimbert, *VA*, c. 25.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Martel, *Die Briefe*, no. 22.

<sup>33</sup> Simeon L. Guterman, *From Personal to Territorial Law: Aspects of the History and Structure of the Western Legal-Constitutional Tradition* (Metuchen, NJ, 1972).

<sup>34</sup> *Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica*, MGH DD Mer., 1, no. 95. On the problems of the diploma, see Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini*, pp. 90–94. See also Angenendt, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius', pp. 281–82.

<sup>35</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 93.

political background is uncertain. The later Merovingian kings had developed a reputation as *rois fainéants*, but many of our popular images — for example, Einhard's sketch of powerless kings drawn around Gaul by oxen — were created by Carolingian propaganda in order to justify the later takeover.<sup>36</sup> The last independent Merovingian was Chilperic II (d. 720), who was notable for defeating Charles Martel at Cologne in 716 with an alliance which included Radbod, described in contemporary sources as *dux* of the Frisians.<sup>37</sup> Theuderic IV, Chilperic's successor, is visible in the sources doing little beyond confirming the charters of Charles Martel. Indeed, Charles's power had become such that he was able to work without a king during the interregnum of 737–43.<sup>38</sup> But it is important not to underestimate the symbolic authority of the Merovingian line. Armies had followed inexperienced ten-year-olds into battle because of their family name.<sup>39</sup> The support of figures like Boniface and Burchard went a long way to signalling the manner in which times were changing.

The coronation of 751 was allegedly preceded by the sending of an embassy to Rome in 750. According to the court *Annales regni Francorum*, Pippin sent Abbot Fulrad of St Denis (d. 784) and Bishop Burchard of Würzburg to ask Pope Zacharias whether it was right for Childeric III, Pippin's powerless puppet king, to hold his position, or whether Pippin should be king.<sup>40</sup> Zacharias apparently replied that, indeed, it was not right for Childeric to sit on the throne. The sources for these important manoeuvres are unfortunately deeply problematic.<sup>41</sup> Of greatest concern to this present study is the alleged role of Burchard, which for numerous reasons seems implausible. This was a highly important errand to be entrusted to an aging bishop of no certain authority. The see of Würzburg had only been in existence since c. 742, and any precise definition of its powers was still undefined.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Paul Fouracre, 'The Long Shadow of the Merovingians', in *Charlemagne*, ed. by Story, pp. 5–21.

<sup>37</sup> *Liber historiae Francorum*, c. 52; *Fredegarii Chronica – Continuationes*, ed. by J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (London, 1960), c. 9.

<sup>38</sup> Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, p. 156.

<sup>39</sup> See the sad story of Sigibert III: *Fredegarii Chronica*, IV. 87.

<sup>40</sup> *ARF*, s.a. 749.

<sup>41</sup> Collins, *Charlemagne*, pp. 33–37; McKitterick, 'Illusion of Royal Power'.

<sup>42</sup> Christopher J. Carroll, 'The Archbishops and Church Provinces of Mainz and Cologne during the Carolingian Period, 751–911' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1999), p. 22. On the foundation of the Bonifatian bishoprics of Central Germany, see pp. 153–58 below.

Burchard's only claim to any genuine significance was that he was Boniface's most senior colleague; by contrast his fellow *missus*, Fulrad, was Pippin's palace chaplain and abbot of the important West Frankish monastery of St Denis. They may have represented 'East' and 'West', although this would make some big assumptions about divisions under Pippin and how representative Burchard was.<sup>43</sup> Court traditions aside, no source mentions an appeal to Zacharias, and no other source suggests Burchard assisted Pippin's coup, not even the *Vita Bonifatii* or *Vita antiquior Burchardi*. Such silences have led Rosamond McKitterick for one to wonder with some justification whether the embassy was nothing more than a later literary construction.<sup>44</sup>

Pippin's coup brought about a change in regime, embassy or not. In 751 King Childeric III was tonsured and sent into a monastery. The cutting of the hair was symbolic: long hair represented the mystical strength of the Merovingian dynasty, and with its removal went the illusion.<sup>45</sup> At this point, claims the *Annales regni Francorum*, Boniface anointed Pippin as the new king of the Franks. Few modern historians have found this last part of the story entirely convincing as it stands.<sup>46</sup> The *Vita Bonifatii* mentions that Pippin was elevated to the position of king but makes no reference to Boniface's involvement, instead giving the impression that Boniface was too unwell to play an active role in Pippin's religious plans.<sup>47</sup> No other contemporary source gives the impression that Boniface had any role in the coronation. Arguments that the Franks were not interested in Boniface and that the people writing about Boniface were not interested in Pippin seem out of sorts with the evidence.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps tellingly, letters from c. 751 written by Boniface to the

<sup>43</sup> McKitterick, 'Illusion of Royal Power', p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> McKitterick, 'Illusion of Royal Power', pp. 16–17.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Edward Dutton, 'Charlemagne's Mustache', in his *Charlemagne's Mustache*, pp. 3–42 (pp. 17–23).

<sup>46</sup> Schieffer, *Winfid-Bonifatius*, pp. 259–60; Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, 'Bonifatius und die Königssalbung Pippins der Jüngeren', *Archiv für Diplomatik*, 23 (1977), 25–54; McKitterick, 'Illusion of Royal Power'; von Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 82–83.

<sup>47</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Jörg Jarnut, 'Wer hat Pippin 751 zum König gesalbt?', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 16 (1982), 45–57 (pp. 51–54). Josef Semmler defended Jarnut in his 'Bonifatius, die Karolinger und "die Franken"', in *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft, 750–1000*, ed. by Dieter R. Bauer and others (Sigmaringen, 1998), pp. 3–49 (pp. 45–46), on the grounds that the act of anointing was the kind of symbolism Boniface would have supported, but this argument also gets us no closer to resolving the differences in the sources.

court do not indicate any closeness with Pippin; in one he had to ask Fulrad to approach Pippin on his behalf, and in another he had to ask for permission to attend a royal assembly in 753.<sup>49</sup> Boniface had been the chief religious advisor to Pippin's brother and it is never clear to what extent Carloman's followers were integrated into Pippin's circle. A more plausible candidate to have presided over events was Bishop Chrodegang of Metz (d. 766), who was Pippin's advisor and a member of a powerful noble family.<sup>50</sup> The role of Boniface in the coronation of 751 would seem to be a later invention.

If Boniface and Burchard were not involved in the events of 751, one must explain why the Carolingians retrospectively wished them to have been. The answer possibly lies in the nature of the cult of saints in the late Merovingian world. In the seventh century, many communities venerated new saints drawn from the political environment. The martyrs Aunemund of Lyons (d. 660), Praejectus of Volvic (d. 676), and Leudegar of Autun (d. 677x679) all died for their role in political disputes of their day; Lambert of Maastricht (d. 705x707) even died in a bloodfeud in which he was implicated in the original murder. People venerated these saints partly because they were representative of the fabric and tenor of local communities. Saints were symbolic of different factions and families. Paul Fouracre has shown that the Carolingians responded to this situation by attempting to regulate the creation of new saints, thus controlling potential rallying points for dissent.<sup>51</sup> In this context Boniface appears as the first new saint of the Carolingian era. Here was a genuine martyr who had worked with the Carolingians to help reform the Frankish Church, with the added advantage that he was not related to the noble families of the continent. If the *Vita Bonifatii* is to be believed, Pippin III attempted to intervene in the cult of Boniface from the beginning to keep the body in Utrecht, possibly appreciating the benefits of having a new saint for the region to aid its Christianization; when that failed Pippin instead helped to promote the cult site at Dokkum

<sup>49</sup> The letter to Fulrad is *Die Briefe*, no. 93, in which Boniface appeals to the abbot: 'id est, ut meo verbo gloriosum et amabilem regem nostrum Pippinum salutaveris et illi magnas gratias referas de omnibus pietatis operibus, qui mecum fecit; et ut illi referas, quod mihi et amicis meis [veri] simile esse videtur'. The letter to Pippin is *Die Briefe*, no. 107, in which Boniface pleads, 'Propterea petimus vos, ut nobis indicetis, si ad placitum istum debeamus venire, ut vestram voluntatem perficiamus'.

<sup>50</sup> Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 259; McKitterick, 'Illusion of Royal Power', p. 15. On Chrodegang, see now Claussen, *Reform of the Frankish Church*.

<sup>51</sup> Fouracre, 'Origins of the Carolingian Attempt to Regulate'.

where Liudger would later build a church.<sup>52</sup> Boniface's life and the manner of his death seemed to create obvious potential for a high-level cult to be created.

Pippin's successors also took an active interest in Boniface's cult. Boniface was, alongside Kilian, one of only two recent saints to be included in the calendar attached to the Godescalc Evangelistary of 781x783 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS nouv. acq. 1203).<sup>53</sup> This elaborately decorated manuscript was intended as a visual statement of authority to accompany Charlemagne's march into Italy to meet Pope Hadrian.<sup>54</sup> It places the cult of Boniface at the heart of the Frankish portrayal of their Christian horizons.<sup>55</sup> Also from Charlemagne's court, the author(s) of the *Annales regni Francorum* developed the legends about Boniface to justify their activities. It was reported that in 772 Charlemagne had destroyed the great Irminsul in Saxony, a focal point for pagan worship in the region.<sup>56</sup> The event was a crowning glory for the Frankish king and marked what he hoped was the final suppression of the Saxons. He was, however, greatly mistaken and the Saxons revolted again the following year.<sup>57</sup> There then follows a story almost completely out of place in the early sections of the annals so dominated by royal politics. The Saxons, it reports, attacked the church of Fritzlar and attempted to burn it down, only to be thwarted by the intervention of two young men dressed in white. Thus, it claimed, the prophecy of St Boniface that the church would never be burnt down was fulfilled. The story in the annal is peculiar because it relates the power of a specific saint — 'the most recent martyr' — in defence of the Frankish *regnum*. Through the *Annales regni Francorum* at least, the Frankish court was developing an association between their rise and expansion and a saint who embodied that very process through his ties with Rome and his missionary work.<sup>58</sup> It is perhaps

<sup>52</sup> Willibald, *VB*, cc. 8–9.

<sup>53</sup> Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*, pp. 77–80. For an edition, see Ferdinand Piper, *Karls des Großen Kalendarium und Ostertafel* (Berlin, 1858). See also Arno Borst, *Die karolingische Kalenderreform*, MGH Schriften, 46 (Hannover, 1998), pp. 199–200, where it is one of the last calendars before the compilation of the great *Reichskalender* of 789. Against Borst's thesis, see Paul Meyvaert, 'Discovering the Calendar (*annalis libellus*) Attached to Bede's Own Copy of *De temporum ratione*', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 120 (2002), 5–64.

<sup>54</sup> Jean Porcher, 'Book Painting', in *Carolingian Art*, by Jean Hubert, Jean Porcher, and W. F. Volbach (London, 1970), pp. 71–188 (pp. 75–78).

<sup>55</sup> Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*, pp. 78–79.

<sup>56</sup> *ARF*, s.a. 772.

<sup>57</sup> *ARF*, s.a. 773.

<sup>58</sup> Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*, pp. 84–85.

therefore appropriate that when, at the court of Emperor Louis the Pious, Ermoldus Nigellus came to celebrate the submission and conversion of the Danish king Harald Klak in 826, he also invoked the memory of Boniface.<sup>59</sup>

At the same time the story of Boniface presented a powerful cult and narrative that could function outside the historical discourses of Carolingian propaganda. The *Vita Bonifatii* itself demonstrated that Pippin was powerless to stop the translation of Boniface's body to Germany when a miracle prompted an official in Utrecht to ignore the King's instructions.<sup>60</sup> In Utrecht's own *Vita altera Bonifatii*, not a single secular figure is mentioned at any point despite the intimate role kings and nobles played in the work of Boniface and Willibrord. Liudger tells the dramatic story in the *Vita Gregorii* about unscrupulous characters at the court of Pippin and Carloman plotting to murder Boniface out of jealousy.<sup>61</sup> None of this was intended to criticize the Carolingians, but it does demonstrate the power of hagiographical discourses to operate outside prevailing political conditions or to provide some reflection upon them.<sup>62</sup> A further danger from texts on the frontiers is illustrated by Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*. Eichstätt is often described in modern historiography as a kind of Carolingian outpost in Bavaria and yet the only senior secular figure mentioned is Duke Odilo, who comes across positively despite fights with Pippin and Carloman.<sup>63</sup> Again one should not look to see Willibald or Hygeburg as dissident figures; rather, they enjoyed a level of independence that developed from the fluid composition of social circles around Bavaria.<sup>64</sup>

Missionary *vitae* and the Anglo-Saxons played a further role in supporting Charlemagne's imperial coronation in 800.<sup>65</sup> The motivations behind the

<sup>59</sup> Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hludowici*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Poetae, 1, IV. 733–38: 'Mira fides rerum! Bonefatus almus in illo | Tempore decessit, quem sacer ille videt | Ferrea Frisionem Christi dum dogmate vellet | Frangere corda, viam ad caelica regna dare | Morbida heu medicum mox gens extinxit opimum | Vulture quippe suo regna paravit ei'.

<sup>60</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8.

<sup>61</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 4.

<sup>62</sup> For another example, see Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker'.

<sup>63</sup> Weinfurter, 'Das Bistum Willibalds', p. 21.

<sup>64</sup> For another example, see Joachim Jahn, 'Bischof Arbeo von Freising und die Politik seiner Zeit', in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. by Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta (Vienna, 1994), pp. 57–62.

<sup>65</sup> Collins, *Charlemagne*, pp. 141–59; Folz, *Coronation of Charlemagne*, pp. 132–50; Roger Collins, 'Charlemagne's Coronation and the Annals of Lorsch', in *Charlemagne*, ed. by Story, pp. 52–70; Henry Mayr-Harting, 'Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800',



*translatio imperii* are obscured again by the contradictory nature of the sources. Charlemagne was forced to help restore Pope Leo III after he had been attacked by a mob in Rome and forced to flee. The King spent Christmas in Rome and, on Christmas Day, the Pope placed an imperial crown on his head. Amongst those eager to offer their thoughts at this time was Alcuin. Although ill of health in Tours, news of the Pope's troubles prompted the Abbot to write a series of letters on the evils of the world.<sup>66</sup> In one to Charlemagne, the King was urged to recognize that his power now exceeded that of the pope and the Byzantine emperors: 'ecce!,' Alcuin wrote, 'in te solo tota salus ecclesiarum Christi inclinata recumbit.'<sup>67</sup> The King had taken up a theoretical role formerly taken up by the Christian emperor. The extent to which the thoughts of people like Alcuin directly shaped the events of 800 is unclear, and most near-contemporary accounts claimed that there was no premeditation to the coronation. Alcuin, however, was one of a number of people Charlemagne visited before travelling to Rome in the summer.<sup>68</sup> In 801, the Abbot welcomed the *translatio imperii* and offered his thoughts on the *potestas* of the Emperor:

dum dignitas imperialis a Deo ordinata, ad nil aliud exaltata esse videtur, nisi populo praeesse et prodesse: proinde datur a Deo electis potestas et sapientia: potestas, ut superbos opprimat, et defendat ab improbis humiles; sapientia, ut regat et doceat pia sollicitudine subiectos.<sup>69</sup>

Not far from Alcuin's thoughts in these letters was the conversion of the Saxons. These were exactly the kinds of people he hoped, in the same letter, would submit themselves voluntarily to Charlemagne, having previously resisted. In his letters of 799 he had expressed the hope that Charlemagne's intervention in Rome would lead to a change in policy, not least because he did not think the strong-arm approach

*EHR*, 444 (1996), 1113–33. For a review of older literature, see François L. Ganshof, 'The Imperial Coronation of Charlemagne: Theories and Facts', in his *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, pp. 41–54.

<sup>66</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, nos 173–74, 177–79.

<sup>67</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 174: 'Behold! For with you alone does the safety of Christ's churches lie.'

<sup>68</sup> *ARF*, s.a. 800. The stay was prolonged due to the death of Charlemagne's wife Liutburga and her subsequent burial.

<sup>69</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 257: 'while imperial rank is ordained by God, it is not something to be exalted unless it is used to lead and benefit the people. Hence the elect is given power and wisdom by God: power, so that he may suppress the arrogant and defend the humble from wickedness; and wisdom, so that he can rule and teach his subjects with pious care'.

was working.<sup>70</sup> Charlemagne had initially ignored the suggestion and remained on campaign until Pope Leo himself visited the King at Paderborn.<sup>71</sup> The meeting was to mark an intimate connection between the imperial title and Saxony.

The *translatio imperii* had particular relevance to the audiences for hagiography in Saxony. Lebuin told the Saxon satraps that since they had had no king, ‘ita non erit rex qui contra vos praevalere possit et sibi subicere’ — a phrase Henry Mayr-Harting has suggested should be taken to imply it would be an emperor who would make them subject.<sup>72</sup> Indeed it may have been that the appropriation of the imperial title helped Charlemagne to justify his conquests and the Saxons to adapt to their new overlords.<sup>73</sup> Saxony, like Lombardy before it, maintained an aura of separateness from the Frankish realm that had to be renegotiated frequently.<sup>74</sup> The *Vita Willehadi* contributed to these discourses. In glossing the power of Charlemagne, the Bremen cleric gives an account of the *translatio imperii* which seems to draw on the *Annales Laureshamensis*.<sup>75</sup> The author’s use of a set of annals related to the Lorsch compilation is implied by the chronological precision in the account of the Saxon conquests, including the use of *anno Domini* dating which was still uncommon outside annals or the works of Bede.<sup>76</sup> Like the *Annales Laureshamensis*, the author points to the decline of the Greek emperors as a justification for Charlemagne taking the title, taking issue with the Greeks being ruled by a woman, the Empress Irene.<sup>77</sup> Roger Collins has argued that this justification represents an early attempt by the Carolingian court to rationalize the events of 800 — one which soon gave way in other sources to a rhetoric of *humilitas* once Irene was deposed

<sup>70</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 174 and no. 185.

<sup>71</sup> *ARF*, s.a. 799.

<sup>72</sup> *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, ed. by Adolf Hofmeister, MGH SS, 30.2 (Hannover, 1926), c. 6: ‘so it will not be a king who is able to defeat and subjugate you to him’. Mayr-Harting, ‘Charlemagne’, pp. 1125–26.

<sup>73</sup> Mayr-Harting, ‘Charlemagne’, and Ehlers, ‘Die Sachsenmission’.

<sup>74</sup> Palmer, ‘Beyond Frankish Authority?’. There were differences between the Saxon and Lombard politics too: Collins, *Charlemagne*, p. 148.

<sup>75</sup> *VWhad*, c. 5.

<sup>76</sup> *VWhad*, cc. 5–6, c. 8. Georg Pertz, in his edition of the text in MGH SS, 2 (Hannover, 1829), directed readers to the Spanish Moissac Chronicle — another text derived in part from a recension of the Lorsch annals — but there are few verbal or geographical reasons for seeing this as the author’s source.

<sup>77</sup> *Annales Laureshamensis*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 1 (Hannover, 1826), s.a. 801.

in 802.<sup>78</sup> The author of the *Vita Willehadi* thus wove his saint's Life around the written historical traditions he had available rather than contemporary ideas on the subject of Saxony. The intertextuality involved helped to contribute to the legitimization of Carolingian authority in the North.

The Anglo-Saxons and the Carolingians cooperated in various fields, from the implementation of *Klosterpolitik* to the promotion of learning in the *imperium*. These are themes to which we will return later. For now, it is important to take the idea that Boniface and other Anglo-Saxons had played a variety of parts in the rise of the Carolingians and had no doubt benefited from it, but that their association with the family was also in some cases exaggerated and in others weakened. The Carolingians were only one part of a more complex network of social and political relations in Frankia. It is essential to understand the place of the Anglo-Saxons on the wider political stage in order to realize the limits of their relationships with those at the top.

### *The Frankish Nobility*

The Anglo-Saxons drew important support from the other aristocratic families of the Frankish kingdoms. Both Willibrord and Boniface allied with the Trier family of Irmina of Oeren and Adela of Pfalzel, or what Hlawitschka called the 'Hugobert-Irmina-Sippe'.<sup>79</sup> Not only did this family provide material support, but in Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* the bonds between the saints and the family acquired a hagiographical conceptualization which ensured they were commemorated beyond their practical existence. Support for the Anglo-Saxon missions began under Irmina of Oeren, who was the prime mover behind the foundation of Echternach in 697/98.<sup>80</sup> Irmina's daughters were also generous benefactors of the monastery — one, Plectrudis, taking it under her protection in 706.<sup>81</sup> But for all this material support there is no sense in the hagiography of a lasting affection for these activities. Echternach and Trier, for example, only received passing mentions by Alcuin

<sup>78</sup> Collins, 'Charlemagne's Coronation'. The later tradition is represented by the *ARF*, s.a. 801, and Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 28.

<sup>79</sup> Erich Hlawitschka, 'Die Vorfahren Karls des Großen', in *Karl der Große: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, vol. 1: *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. by Helmut Beumann (Düsseldorf, 1965), pp. 51–82 (p. 54). On this family group, see Werner, *Adelsfamilien*.

<sup>80</sup> Echternach, no. 1; Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 60–98.

<sup>81</sup> Echternach, nos 14–15.

as a context for Willibrord's work.<sup>82</sup> The branch of the family which received the most praise was that of Adela, Irmina's daughter and abbess of the monastery of Pfalzel, again near Trier.<sup>83</sup> It was through Adela, Liudger told, that Boniface had met her cousin Gregory, the future Abbot of Utrecht.<sup>84</sup> A letter from Abbess Ælflaet of Whitby (d. 713) to Adela about pilgrimage suggests that Adela had long been someone Anglo-Saxons could turn to for support on their pilgrimages, possibly through association with Willibrord.<sup>85</sup> The 'Hugobert-Irmina-Sippe' were thus pre-eminent as generous benefactors of the missions.

The family was closely implicated in the rise of the Pippinids. Pippin II's marriage to Plectrudis brought greater landed wealth to the *maior palatii*. Ties between the families were also later reformed by the marriage of Pippin III to Bertrada the Younger, granddaughter of Plectrudis's sister Bertrada the Elder of Prüm.<sup>86</sup> We have already seen that Willibrord was important in leading noble factions away from Plectrudis to support Charles Martel, so the later marriage can perhaps be taken as a sign of the continued advantages to an alliance with the 'Hugobert-Irmina-Sippe'. Liudger makes several references to court connections. When Boniface first met Gregory in c. 722, the boy had recently returned from attending the court *scola*.<sup>87</sup> Later we also hear of his *nepos* and future successor Alberic occupied in the service of Charlemagne in Italy in 776.<sup>88</sup> Things were not always smooth, and in a letter from Boniface to Pope Zacharias it transpired that Gregory was unable to succeed his teacher as bishop because one of his brothers had killed Charles Martel's uncle.<sup>89</sup> This is likely a reflection of the bitter struggles which soured the years after Charles Martel's death while Grifo attempted — and failed — to secure himself a share of his father's inheritance from his half-brothers Pippin

<sup>82</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 21.

<sup>83</sup> On Adela, see Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 176–213.

<sup>84</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 2. It has been suggested that Boniface received the Ragyndrudis Codex through his connections with Pfalzel, because a Regentrud was another sister of Adela's. Against this hypothesis, see Hans-Walter Stork, 'Der Codex Ragyndrudis im Domschatz zu Fulda (Codex Bonifatianus II)', in *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des hl. Bonifatius*, ed. by von Padberg and Stork, pp. 77–134 (pp. 86–87).

<sup>85</sup> Ælflaet, *Die Briefe*, no. 8. On the letter, see Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 203–04.

<sup>86</sup> Hlawitschka, 'Die Vorfahren', pp. 54–55.

<sup>87</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 2.

<sup>88</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 15; Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, p. 314.

<sup>89</sup> Gregory is not specifically identified, but see Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 304–10, for a plausible defence of the suggestion.

and Carloman.<sup>90</sup> Association with the ‘Hugobert-Irmina-Sippe’ and the Pippinids did not amount to the same thing. It remains testament to Boniface’s own position, in this context, that his own ambitions were not much hindered by such tensions between groups of his supporters. Liudger’s *Vita Gregorii* thus takes us belatedly into a world where there was substantial overlap between secular power structures and the work of the Anglo-Saxons and their followers.

The union of aristocracy and missionary hagiography helps us to understand some of the logic of the missions’ enduring force and popularity. Heinz Löwe argued that the *Vita Gregorii* provided lessons on the aristocratic virtues of *constantia*, *magnanimitas*, and *fortitudo*.<sup>91</sup> Liudger placed great stress on *nobilitas*, not just as designator of secular status, but as something that defined Gregory’s dignity.<sup>92</sup> Similar turns of phrase are not uncommon in hagiography, the *vitae* about Gregory the Great providing a particularly apt example in a study of the Anglo-Saxons and the continent.<sup>93</sup> The use of stories about the Anglo-Saxon missions to educate the Frankish and Frisian nobilities provides an important context for understanding their endurance. Authority in the early Middle Ages worked through example, and the Anglo-Saxons provided an ‘exemplum [...] usque in hodiernum diem’.<sup>94</sup> They became representative of ways in which the secular and sacred spheres could interact. At one point Liudger describes Gregory’s disciples — including Frankish nobles — as follows:

quidam enim eorum erant de nobili stirpe Francorum, quidam autem et de religiosa gente Anglorum, quidam vero et de novella Dei plantatione diebus nostris inchoata Fresonum et Saxonum, quidam autem et de Baguariis et Suevis praeditis eadem religione, vel de quacumque natione et gente misisset eos Deus.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 50. The letter should not be seen in conjunction with the story of the murder of Gregory’s half-brothers by thieves (Liudger, *VG*, c. 9) because Liudger’s story seems to have a different political context: Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 312–13. On Grifo, see now Stuart Airlie, ‘Towards a Carolingian Aristocracy’, in *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751*, ed. by Becher and Jarnut, pp. 109–27.

<sup>91</sup> Löwe, ‘Liudger als Zeitkritik’, pp. 88–89.

<sup>92</sup> See especially Liudger, *VG*, c. 1.

<sup>93</sup> *Vita Gregorii papae*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge, 1985), c. 1.

<sup>94</sup> *Vita Gregorii*, c. 1: ‘an example up to the present day’.

<sup>95</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 11: ‘For some of them were nobles of the line of the Franks, others of them were of the religious race of the English, some were the young of God from the Frisians and Saxons, who received the faith in our days, others were Bavarians and Sueves of the same religion, or of other nations and races whom God sent to him.’

Here, as Lutz von Padberg has observed, the work of Boniface and Gregory had become a model for the Frankish *imperium* through the unity of the spiritual and the political.<sup>96</sup> Liudger was writing late in the 790s or early in the 800s when Charlemagne's triumphs had created a tangible new political order among different groups of peoples. He was also possibly reflecting on his own problems as a frustrated missionary, writing as he was in a region where mission and Frankish expansion had gone hand-in-hand.<sup>97</sup> The *Vita Gregorii* provides an example of aristocratic values and political history reshaped by Liudger's conceptualization of history, which in turn were offered to the *saeculares*.

Trier, significantly, was a source for much of Boniface's angst about the intrusion of secular values in the Church, despite also providing the bedrock of his support. A single family had provided successive bishops for the city, including Basinus (d. 705), Liutwin (d. 715x722), his son Milo (d. 758), and a further relative called Weomad (d. 791). While this in itself was not a great problem, it grated with Boniface when people like Milo behaved like secular noblemen. Boniface's famous complaint about clerics drinking and fighting is thought to refer to Milo, although he only explicitly accused Milo of preaching irregularly, and then only in a later letter.<sup>98</sup> Milo's bad historical reputation was partly born of his support for Charles Martel, and certainly the accusations of Hincmar of Rheims in the ninth century that his distant predecessor had despoiled Church lands in Rheims.<sup>99</sup> Boniface's reforms never diminished Milo's position and the Bishop was still amongst Pippin's *fideles* in 753.<sup>100</sup> Other members of the family had been supportive of the Anglo-Saxons. Basinus and Liutwin both witnessed early charters of Echternach, and Basinus was also commemorated in Willibrord's calendar.<sup>101</sup> Key members of

<sup>96</sup> Von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 239–40. See also Airie, 'Frankish Aristocracy'.

<sup>97</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 112.

<sup>98</sup> On drunken, fighting bishops, see Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 50 (notably juxtaposed with Boniface's lament that Gregory's promotion was being hindered). On Milo, see Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 87. Ewig, 'Milo', p. 421.

<sup>99</sup> Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 124–25. On Milo's support for Charles, see *Gesta sanctorum patrum Fontanellensis coenobii*, ed. by Fernand Lohier and Jean Laporte (Rouen, 1936), III. 5.

<sup>100</sup> MGH DD Kar., 1, no. 6.

<sup>101</sup> Echternach, nos 3, 6, and 9; *Calendar of Willibrord*, fol. 35<sup>v</sup>. It is possible the absence of an entry for Liutwin implies he was not close to Willibrord (Ewig, 'Milo', p. 415 and n.19), but the compilation of the calendar is not systematic and even the entry for Basinus is an addition later than the original compilation.

the family also followed Willibrord when they shifted their allegiance from Plec-trudis to Charles Martel in c. 717.<sup>102</sup> Boniface's circle, insofar as it can be treated as something different to Willibrord's, found that they could cooperate with the family. Basinus of Speyer, for example, can be found alongside Lull and Megingoz overseeing the translation of the relics of St Goar.<sup>103</sup> The *Bischofsdynastie* were not an organized party opposed to the work of the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>104</sup> Difficulties arose only where certain bishops were going about their work in very different ways. It is nevertheless intriguing that Charlemagne had wanted Liudger to succeed Weomad as bishop, which would have established the spiritual heir of Boniface and Gregory in a city which had helped to define their work; Liudger, however, refused the offer to focus on his missionary work further North.<sup>105</sup>

Certain parallels with Trier can be found in Boniface's eventual episcopal city of Mainz. Boniface's relationship with the city of Mainz began with a series of arguments. Gregory II mentions in a letter of 724 that Boniface had clashed with Bishop Gerold, who 'in eadem gente praedicationis verbum disseminare neglexerat et nunc sibi partem quasi in parrochiam defendit'.<sup>106</sup> It is one of the earliest examples of Boniface's struggle against the entrenched nobility of Frankish cities. Later Boniface also had a dispute with Bishop Gewilib, Gerold's son and successor. In a letter from Zacharias dated 745, it emerged that Boniface had denounced Gewilib as a *seductor* ('false teacher') and accused him of 'unlawfully holding the office of bishop'.<sup>107</sup> Gewilib travelled to Rome, perhaps to defend himself, but Zacharias sided with Boniface and wrote that 'when he arrives action shall be taken as pleases God'.<sup>108</sup> None of this is to say that the Mainz clergy formed anything resembling

<sup>102</sup> Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 62–63.

<sup>103</sup> Wandalbert, *Miracula s. Goaris*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), c. 1.

<sup>104</sup> The classic polarized image of 'reformers' and 'anti-reformers' is given by Ewig, 'Milo', esp. pp. 412–21, but see now Reuter, "Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik", pp. 35–51, on the anachronism of such terminology, and Dierkens, "Carolus monasteriorum?", pp. 290–93, on Boniface's exaggeration of the crimes of the Merovingians.

<sup>105</sup> *Vita Liudgeri secunda*, I. 17.

<sup>106</sup> Gregory II, *Die Briefe*, no. 24: 'had neglected to disseminate the preached word amongst those people and now defends part of it as if it was his own parish'. See Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, pp. 130–32, 149.

<sup>107</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 60: 'tua [...] intimasti nobis de alio seductore nomine Geoleobo, qui antea false episcopi honore fungebatur'.

<sup>108</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 60: 'Et dum advenerit, ut Domino placuerit, fiet'.



an ‘anti-reform party’ either.<sup>109</sup> The elite of Mainz, of whom Gerold and Gewilib belonged, were notorious for their unity, and in the seventh century were referred to as the *Macanenses* (‘the men of Mainz’).<sup>110</sup> Long-powerful families in many cities often had a hold on episcopal office, but this was also the kind of local power which needed to be channelled or reconstituted by the Carolingians. Boniface’s role here perhaps did not set the scene for a happy reception in Mainz, and Willibald makes no reference to the disputes with Gerold and Gewilib. Only in a later revisionist tradition from Mainz were the two sides reconciled, but even then it was noted that Gewilib’s rude manners were tempered by his piety.<sup>111</sup>

There are remarkably few references to Boniface and Lull’s archiepiscopal see of Mainz in the *Vita Bonifatii*, given that Lull was an addressee of the text and that Willibald was allegedly based in St Victor’s in Mainz.<sup>112</sup> Willibald makes only three passing references to the city and gives no sense of Boniface’s significance there.<sup>113</sup> In all truth, Mainz was only Boniface’s second choice as his archiepiscopal see. In the same letter Zacharias wrote to Boniface about Gewilib in 745, the Pope noted that ‘at the request of the Franks’ he was to confirm Cologne as Boniface’s metropolitan see.<sup>114</sup> Cologne had close ties to the Frisian mission field on which Boniface had hoped to capitalize, remembering his time at Utrecht in the 720s. In a letter dated 1 May 748, however, Zacharias noted a report from Boniface about Cologne, ‘quod Franci non perseveraverunt in verbo, quod promiserunt, et nunc moratur tua fraternitas in civitate Magontia’.<sup>115</sup> Why Cologne was closed to Boniface is never explained but there was evident resentment towards Hildegard, who was

<sup>109</sup> See note 104 above.

<sup>110</sup> *Fredregarii Chronica*, IV. 87; Matthew Innes, ‘People, Places and Power in Carolingian Society’, in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Mayke de Jong, Frans Theuws, and Carine van Rhijn, TRW, 6 (Leiden, 2001), pp. 397–438 (p. 408).

<sup>111</sup> *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG, 57 (Hannover, 1905), c. 1; Ewig, ‘Milo’, p. 422. The later tradition is taken at face value in Franz Staab, ‘“Rudi populo rudis adhuc presul”: Zu den wehrhaften Bischöfen der Zeit Karl Martells’, *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 249–75, who gives a more positive impression of Gerold and Gewilib.

<sup>112</sup> For Willibald in Mainz, see *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, c. 13.

<sup>113</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 7 and c. 8.

<sup>114</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 60: ‘De civitate [. . .] Colonia, iuxta petitionem Francorum per nostrae auctoritatis preceptum nomini tuo metropolim confirmavimus.’

<sup>115</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 80: ‘the Franks had not preserved their word, which they had promised, and now your brotherhood resides in the city of Mainz’.

elected in his place and who also died at the hands of pagans barely a year before him.<sup>116</sup> Boniface's position in Mainz seems uncertain, although this is in no small part due to the fragmentary sources. Our one other source about Boniface in Mainz is a charter purporting to be from Pope Zacharias, raising the see to archiepiscopal status.<sup>117</sup> Michael Tangl pointed out that, contrary to what would be expected, there was no copy kept in Rome, and the charter appears anyway to be a later forgery based upon a genuine charter for Cologne.<sup>118</sup> Our only other near-contemporary hagiographical reference to the Anglo-Saxons in Mainz is the *Vita Wynnebaldi*; but there Hygeburg gave a negative portrayal of life in the city to justify Wynnebald's decision to head for the Altmühl.<sup>119</sup> Things were not necessarily easy for the Anglo-Saxons in the city in either practice or historical imagination.

There were distinct benefits drawn from association with the aristocracy of the surrounding Rhine valley. Two charters from 763 show Lull actively buying land and servants from a local magnate called Laidrat.<sup>120</sup> The lands included a public square in Mainz, located prominently within the city walls on the banks of the Rhine and along the important *via communis*.<sup>121</sup> Lull was buying into the physical infrastructure of the city in order to allow him to participate more fully in public life, perhaps counteracting some of the problems that he had hitherto faced. Access to the Rhine and the *via communis* also afforded Lull the opportunity to promote his work among the merchants and pilgrims who visited the city, including on one occasion Alcuin.<sup>122</sup> Laidrat himself was a figure of some importance, regularly appearing among the benefactors and witness lists of the Fulda charters. An important gift in the context of the missions came on 23 July 754, when he donated a

<sup>116</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 91 and no. 92. Hildegard's death is mentioned in *ARF*, s.a. 753 and most of the minor annals.

<sup>117</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 88.

<sup>118</sup> Michael Tangl, 'Studien zur Neuausgabe der Briefe des hl. Bonifatius und Lullus, Teil 1', in his *Das Mittelalter in Quellenkunde und Diplomatik: Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. by Walter Eggert (Graz, 1966), I, 60–177 (pp. 174–76).

<sup>119</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, cc. 6–7. In particular Wynnebald needed somewhere where *investigare possit* (c. 7) away from Mainz's *aliis diversa dapium dogma* (c. 6).

<sup>120</sup> *UBF*, no. 40 and no. 41. See Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull, pp. 260–61.

<sup>121</sup> *UBF*, no. 40.

<sup>122</sup> Alcuin, *Carminae*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Poetae, 1 (Berlin, 1881), no. 4. On archaeological evidence for activity on the *via communis*, see Egon Wamers, *Die frühmittelalterlichen Leseefunde aus der Löhrrstrasse (Baustelle Hilton II) in Mainz*, Mainzer archäologische Schriften, 1 (Mainz, 1994).

vineyard in Dienheim, between Mainz and Worms, to Fulda.<sup>123</sup> This is one of a series of gifts by local figures in June and July which followed the translation of Boniface's body to the monastery.<sup>124</sup> A lead was provided by one Otakar, a royal *fidelis* who exerted a hegemony in the lands west of Mainz.<sup>125</sup> The substantial benefice Otakar held from Charlemagne himself may suggest he was complicit with the Carolingian efforts to change the political culture of the locality.<sup>126</sup>

If Otakar and other local nobles were significant for helping to empower the Anglo-Saxon outsiders, they were perhaps even more so as consumers of the cult of saints. The earliest donation to the *monasterium sancti Bonifatii* was made by Eggjolt on 15 June, a mere ten days after Boniface's murder in Dokkum.<sup>127</sup> Otakar followed suit just two days later.<sup>128</sup> This shows a willingness to participate in the creation of the new cult from the outset, without much by way of *Kultenpropaganda*.<sup>129</sup> Eggjolt and Otakar likely knew Boniface before his resignation from Mainz in 753, so here, alongside people like Cuthberht of Canterbury, we have a group of people able to transform the living character they knew into part of a communal institution.<sup>130</sup> It would be surprising if such people were not among the 'petenti religiosi ac catholici viri' whom Willibald imagined as the audience for the *Vita Bonifatii*, although Willibald remained circumspect about the role of Fulda in the cult of Boniface.<sup>131</sup> Eigil was naturally more celebratory, noting that the monastery grew 'utpote quoniam multi nobiles certatim et concite properantes, se suaque omnia ibi Domino tradiderunt'.<sup>132</sup> The noble families of Mainz formed a close social context for the cult of Boniface and its related texts.

<sup>123</sup> UBF, no. 25.

<sup>124</sup> UBF, nos 22–27.

<sup>125</sup> On Otakar and his family, see Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 61–65.

<sup>126</sup> MGH DD Kar., 1, no. 127.

<sup>127</sup> UBF, no. 22.

<sup>128</sup> UBF, no. 23.

<sup>129</sup> Friedrich Prinz, 'Hagiographie als Kultenpropaganda: Die Rolle der Auftraggeber und Autoren hagiographischer Texte des Frühmittelalters', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 103 (1992), 174–94.

<sup>130</sup> On the capacity for friends to transform Boniface from historical person to an 'unindividuated' saint, see Catherine Cubitt, 'Memory and Narrative in the Cult of Early Anglo-Saxon Saints', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 29–66 (pp. 38–39).

<sup>131</sup> Willibald, *VB*, pref.; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 306.

<sup>132</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 16: 'because as many nobles hurried with rivalry and passion, they gave themselves and their everything there to the Lord'.

For the development of the reputation of the Anglo-Saxons, the family of Hrabanus Maurus in the Maingau were of particular importance. Hrabanus's father, Walaram, took over from Otakar in the 770s as the dominant figure in local property transactions, both as a witness and as a benefactor. Walaram gave generously to Fulda, including in 788 his own son as a monk; 'the child oblate', as Matthew Innes put it, 'was a bridge between monastery and family'.<sup>133</sup> Fulda received estates at Hofheim and Hrabanus a town house in Mainz, which helped to maintain his love of his home city. The cult of Boniface had always benefited from the support of a local elite eager to align themselves with the shrine of a powerful martyr saint; the increased role of local figures like Hrabanus in the institutional centre of the cult also helped to bridge the gap between society and the divine. In his attitude to sanctity, Hrabanus was perhaps influenced by his brief time at Tours under the tutelage of Alcuin, to whom he became a favoured pupil.<sup>134</sup> His curious portrayal of the willing martyr Bonifatius of Tarsus (d. 303), after whom Boniface took his Roman name, betrays certain reservations about Boniface's own death.<sup>135</sup> But he was also active as someone who imported Roman saints to the region to expand the cult of saints, at the same time translating the relics of Leoba from the monastery of Fulda to the church on the Ugesberg in 838.<sup>136</sup> Hrabanus is an unusually vibrant example of someone who grew up in the traditions the Anglo-Saxons set down and transformed their legacy to shape a new spiritual world around his homeland.

One final significant figure in the Middle Rhine was Suidger. Most of Suidger's lands were in Hesse in Wetzlar, where he held lands referred to as a *ministerium* (or, in the vernacular, *ambath*).<sup>137</sup> From here in 782 Lull — with Charlemagne as an intermediary — made a grant to the monastery of Fritzlar comprising of a variety of lands including their churches, treasures, and books.<sup>138</sup> Lull's monastery of Bad Hersfeld only has extant royal diplomas so it is impossible to tell what kinds of dealings Lull had had with Suidger and his family beforehand to obtain the land.

<sup>133</sup> UBF, no. 177; Innes, *State and Society*, p. 66.

<sup>134</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 142.

<sup>135</sup> Palmer, 'Frankish Cult of Martyrs', pp. 338–43.

<sup>136</sup> Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space', Chapter 5.

<sup>137</sup> Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 75–76. On Suidger's landholdings in Hesse, see *Codex Laureshamenses*, ed. by Karl Glöckner, 3 vols (Darmstadt, 1929–36), nos 3684b/3066, and MGH DD Kar., 1, no. 142.

<sup>138</sup> MGH DD Kar., 1, no. 142. On Lull's interests here, see Palmer, "'Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull', pp. 266–67.

But we will see with Suidger's role in the foundation of Eichstätt that he was a proactive supporter of Boniface. His family — the Rupertings — also interacted with the Anglo-Saxons and their supporters through their foundation at Lorsch. Alberic of Utrecht was amongst those who witnessed the foundation of the monastery in 764, while a decade later Lull presided over its transference to royal protection.<sup>139</sup> One can also find Laidrat actively supporting Lorsch, much as he did Fulda.<sup>140</sup> The overlapping of these social circles at Lorsch is important. Matthew Innes has argued that the monastery played a part in the political strategies of nobles like Cancor, one of the founders, in integrating the Middle Rhine into the Frankish *regnum*.<sup>141</sup> The Anglo-Saxons' social horizons thus demonstrate them to be complicit with this effort.

### *Thuringia*

Further east, Thuringia provided a tense environment in which the Anglo-Saxons' work could develop. A ducal family called the 'Hedenen' dominated the region. According to Hubert Mordek's reconstruction of events — based on a speculative reading of some thin source material — Duke Heden I was a powerful leader in the early seventh century who was instrumental in the defence of the Frankish-Saxon frontier.<sup>142</sup> Later sources connected the Duke to the Middle Rhine through his marriage to Bilhildis, the niece of Bishop Rigobert of Mainz and the founder of the monastery of Altmünster in Mainz which Boniface may have come to control.<sup>143</sup> Gozbert, the son of Heden and Bilhildis, was credited by the *Passio Kiliani* with receiving Christianity from the Irish missionary St Kilian, but the murder of the saint on the orders of the Duke's estranged wife Geilana brought bad luck to the rest of the line. Gozbert was succeeded by his son Heden the Younger, who now

<sup>139</sup> *Codex Laureshamenses*, no. 1 and c. 7.

<sup>140</sup> *Codex Laureshamenses*, nos 454, 467, 586, and 609. Laidrat also appears in a number of charters as a witness.

<sup>141</sup> Matthew Innes, 'Kings, Monks and Patrons: Political Identity at the Abbey of Lorsch', in *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne*, ed. by Régine Le Jan (Lille, 1998), pp. 301–24, inc. pp. 310–11 on Lull.

<sup>142</sup> Hubert Mordek, 'Die Hedenen als politische Kraft im austrasischen Frankenreich', in *Karl Martell im seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 345–66. Note the reservation of Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, p. 113, n. 115.

<sup>143</sup> On Bilhildis (based on late hagiographical evidence), see Staab, "Rudi populo", pp. 253–55.

appeared to carry the weight of two historical traditions: the name of a powerful predecessor and a mother who had brought bad luck to the family.

The younger Heden behaved much like the noble families we have already encountered so far. In 704 he granted land to Willibrord at Arnstadt, between Ohrdruf and Erfurt.<sup>144</sup> This was followed in 717 by a donation of a monastery in Hammelberg.<sup>145</sup> These grants are thought to belong to missionary work Willibrord undertook in the region while he was unable to work in Toxandria, and may indicate some closeness between the Hedenen and the 'Hugobert-Imrina-Sippe'.<sup>146</sup> Heden's and Pippin's shared patronage of Willibrord also suggests the development of political affiliation through the saint.<sup>147</sup> The grant in Hammelburg, only a month after Charles Martel's victory at Vinchy, seems to indicate a timely political cooperation.<sup>148</sup> But for reasons unknown things do not appear to have proceeded well for the Thuringian ducal family, with no further evidence for their activities.<sup>149</sup> In 718 and 720 Charles Martel fought against the Saxons, the frontier apparently now destabilized and with no sign of the 'Hedenen'.<sup>150</sup> The *Vita Bonifatii* claimed that at this time the tyranny of Heden had forced many to submit to Saxon authority and many more to abandon Christianity.<sup>151</sup> Mordek has argued that Willibald's reference is actually to the older Heden because there is no indication that the Pippinids ever had to reconquer the region.<sup>152</sup> The problem remains that both Willibald and the author of the *Passio Kiliani minor* in Würzburg portray the Hedenen so negatively, despite Heden II's visible actions in the charters. The *Passio* states that 'Hetanum [II] [. . .] populus orientaliū Francorum de regno eiecerunt' and that his family were persecuted until not one remained.<sup>153</sup> The cult of St Kilian in Würzburg represented a kind of triumph over the Hedenen, at

<sup>144</sup> Echternach, no. 8.

<sup>145</sup> Echternach, no. 26.

<sup>146</sup> The evidence for a relationship between the Hedenen and Hugobert-Imrina-Sippe relies on some tenuous name evidence (Werner, *Adelsfamilien*, pp. 152–56) and the connection to Willibrord.

<sup>147</sup> Gerberding, '716', p. 212.

<sup>148</sup> Mordek, 'Die Hedenen', pp. 346–47.

<sup>149</sup> Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 113–14.

<sup>150</sup> *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a. 718.

<sup>151</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>152</sup> Mordek, 'Die Hedenen', pp. 349–51.

<sup>153</sup> *Passio minor Kiliani*, c. 14: 'the people of the East Franks ejected Heden from the kingdom'.

least in the constructions of the *Passio*. That Boniface was responsible for the institutionalization of the cult therefore bound him together with the political change in the region.

Again, it is significant that the Anglo-Saxons played an active role in drawing a region into the Carolingian *regnum*. Hammelburg, having once signified the bond between the Hedenen and Willibrord, was later given in its entirety to the monastery of Fulda by Charlemagne in 777.<sup>154</sup> It was considered important enough to warrant special mention by Eigil in the *Vita Sturm* because it was given in order to establish *amicitia* with Sturm and the monks of Fulda.<sup>155</sup> What had happened to it since 717 is unclear as it was not listed in Willibrord's 'Testament', the list of his landholdings he bequeathed to Echternach on his death.<sup>156</sup> Arnstadt was included on that list, however, so it presumably did remain in Anglo-Saxon hands. In that same region, Charlemagne gave a number of benefices to Lull's monastery at Bad Hersfeld.<sup>157</sup> Like Lorsch and Fulda, Hersfeld had come under royal protection, and we have already seen that Lull could be a willing supporter of Charlemagne's *Klosterpolitik*.<sup>158</sup>

The Anglo-Saxons were no mere representatives of imperialism, but also mediators between the *regnum* and local feeling. If we accept Mordek's reidentification of the 'Eddanus' at the *Concilium Germanicum* as a Hedenen bishop of Erfurt, rather than Haddo of Strasbourg, then we can see a possible instance of Thuringian participation in the Bonifatian project in the east.<sup>159</sup> The cult of Boniface could also be used to diffuse tensions in the region, as illustrated by a story in the Murbach *Annales Nazariani* which tells of a Thuringian rebellion against Charlemagne in 786.<sup>160</sup> The *Thuringi*, portrayed as an undifferentiated group, held a council to

<sup>154</sup> MGH DD Kar., 1, no. 116.

<sup>155</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 24.

<sup>156</sup> Echternach, no. 39.

<sup>157</sup> MGH DD Kar., 1, nos 90, 103–05, 121, 126, 129, 142, 144.

<sup>158</sup> MGH DD Kar., 1, no. 89. On Lull's activities in Thuringia, see Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull, pp. 266–67.

<sup>159</sup> Mordek, 'Die Hedenen', pp. 347–48. See also Heinz Löwe, 'Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem Papsttum und den Karolingern', *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung*, 15 (1954), 85–127 (pp. 98–99).

<sup>160</sup> *Annales Nazariani*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 1 (Hannover, 1826), s.a. 786. The revolt is also mentioned in the related *Annales Loreshamenses*, s.a. 786. On the revolt, see Innes, 'Kings, Monks and Patrons', pp. 313–15; Stuart Airlie, 'Charlemagne and the Aristocracy: Captains and Kings', in *Charlemagne*, ed. by Story, pp. 90–102 (pp. 98–99).



declare their desire to refuse subsequent obedience to Charlemagne. Things had come to a head when fights had broken out over the proposed marriage between a Carolingian *prefatus* and the daughter of a Thuringian nobleman, prompting a furious Charlemagne to seize their farms and possessions. The *Thuringi* (again, there is no effort to be specific) then fled ‘ad corpus beati Bonifatii martyris’ (‘to the body of the blessed martyr Boniface’), hoping that the saint could intervene; in the event Abbot Baugulf of Fulda did, approaching the King on the Thuringians’ behalf and arranging a meeting at Worms, after which the perpetrators were deprived of their *honores* and eyes. To appeal to a saintly *patronus* was to try and bring certainty to fragile human relationships with help from outside.<sup>161</sup> The body of Boniface served as a somewhere from which political appeal could be made, close enough to both the Thuringians and the Carolingians to be effective even when they were in dispute.

### *Bavaria*

The duchy of Bavaria presented the Anglo-Saxons with a different problem because it was run independently of Carolingian power until the deposition of Duke Tassilo in 787–88.<sup>162</sup> Tensions often ran high between the dominant Agilolfings and the Pippinids, prompting Heinz Löwe to characterize Boniface’s work in Bavaria as a response to political tensions between the two.<sup>163</sup> On that reading, Boniface and Willibald originally entered Bavaria at the request of Duke Odilo as part of concerted efforts to head off Frankish expansion with a ‘romverbundenen Landeskirche’. Joachim Jahn has argued that this underestimates the cooperation between the leading Frankish and Bavarian families (and we really should see this as a family thing, rather than a Bavarian-Frankish dispute).<sup>164</sup> Boniface’s presence in Bavaria in c. 723, shortly after obtaining Charles Martel’s protection, could be

<sup>161</sup> On saintly patrons, see Brown, *Cults of the Saints*, pp. 60–68.

<sup>162</sup> Stuart Airlie, ‘Narratives of Triumph and Ritual Submission: Charlemagne’s Mastering of Bavaria’, *TRHS*, 6th series, 9 (1999), 93–119.

<sup>163</sup> Löwe, ‘Bonifatius’, pp. 96–104. The argument relies on Schieffer, ‘Angelsachsen und Franken’, pp. 1435–38, that the papacy was in no position to attempt active involvement in affairs north of the Alps.

<sup>164</sup> Joachim Jahn, ‘Hausmeier und Herzöge: Bemerkungen zur agilolfingische-karolingischen Rivalität bis zum Tode Karl Martells’, in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 317–44, esp. p. 337 on Löwe’s anachronistic characterizations.

a good sign that Charles's word carried some weight in the region.<sup>165</sup> Moreover, Charles and Odilo can be seen supporting each other's authority in Bavaria and joined together through their wives, who were Odilo's niece Swanahild and Charles's daughter Hiltrudis respectively.<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, the setup brought with it tensions which erupted in 741 when, as we have seen, Swanahild's son Grifo tried to claim part of Charles's inheritance from his half-brothers. Pippin and Carloman subdued support for Odilo in 743, and in 748 Pippin defeated Grifo in Bavaria and installed Tassilo as duke.<sup>167</sup> In the midst of this situation, it is clear why Boniface had little further influence in the region.<sup>168</sup>

Despite the court's political narratives, the Bavarian dukes and their supporters were far from maligned by the Anglo-Saxons or their hagiographers.<sup>169</sup> Little is made of Hugobert, Odilo's predecessor, but he was not considered an opponent of Boniface in the earlier 730s and Boniface's time preaching under him is portrayed as a success.<sup>170</sup> Willibald also told that Boniface's later work in Bavaria, in 739–40, was at the invitation of Odilo.<sup>171</sup> The Duke not only renounced heresies without a fuss, but also consented ('consentire') to the reorganization of Bavarian dioceses. In the portrayal of the establishment of canon law in the region, the story of Boniface and Odilo prefigures the successes of Boniface's work with Carloman and Pippin, which are described immediately afterwards. The configuration of the narrative thus serves to make support and success in Bavaria an integral part of the larger theme of Boniface as the hero of *correctio*. This is extended further in Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*. Wynnebald was given a warm reception by Odilo and generous gifts, while Willibald reportedly spent a week with Odilo before building Eichstätt, the Bonifatian central point for Bavaria in the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>172</sup> The two texts together, as they appear in the Bavarian manuscript Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 1086, create a strong impression of Odilo as someone willing to support the missions. The events of 741–48 had not made the pro-Carolingian tone of Bonifatian narratives into an anti-Agilolfing narrative.

<sup>165</sup> Jahn, 'Hausmeier und Herzöge', p. 338.

<sup>166</sup> Jahn, 'Hausmeier und Herzöge', pp. 341–43.

<sup>167</sup> Airlie, 'Narratives of Triumph', p. 98.

<sup>168</sup> Von Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 62.

<sup>169</sup> Weinfurter, 'Das Bistum Willibalds', p. 21.

<sup>170</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>171</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 7.

<sup>172</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 5; Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5.

The attitude of Willibald and Hygeburg towards the Agilolfings and their supporters is a reminder that the situation in Bavaria remained complicated. Virgil of Salzburg and Arbeo of Freising could both work under Odilo and Tassilo during periods of tension and maintain sympathy for the Carolingians.<sup>173</sup> These two were among the earliest audiences for the *Vita Bonifatii*, and we shall return to their reception of the work. What we need to note here is the secular support for the Bonifatian missions. In the *vitae* the most prominent figure after Odilo is Suidger, who gave Boniface and Willibald the site at Eichstätt on which they built their church.<sup>174</sup> The move was perhaps indicative of the careful management of the Altmühl, lying as it did between Frankish and Bavarian territories.<sup>175</sup> Assuming this Suidger is identical with Lull's, here is someone whose resources crossed political boundaries. There was certainly nothing unusual about that in itself.<sup>176</sup> But Suidger had been a prominent supporter of Grifo's in 748, and the *Annales regni Francorum* noted that he was among those defeated by Pippin. The story of his rehabilitation is alas unknown, if there was one. Hygeburg's words are testament, however, to sympathy for the Alemannian Agilolfings as late as the 780s. Hygeburg imagined a strong secular element to her audience, addressing the full work 'ad omnibus presbiteris seu diaconibus et omnibus aecclesiastici regiminis proceribus'.<sup>177</sup> A similarly mixed list is included in the original opening of the *Vita Willibaldi*.<sup>178</sup> On the whole secular figures do not feature prominently, and certainly not Carolingian ones, but the *populariae* and *plebs* of Eichstätt showed popular support for the burial and translation of Wynnebald.<sup>179</sup> It is evidence that the Anglo-Saxon missions could conjure up widespread secular support in the Altmühl with some independence from Carolingian politics.

### *Frisia and Northern Franconia*

The interactions of the Anglo-Saxons with the aristocracies of the northern frontiers reveal further the role the missions played in reshaping the political landscape

<sup>173</sup> Jahn, 'Bischof Arbeo von Freising'.

<sup>174</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5.

<sup>175</sup> Wilhelm Störmer, 'Die bayerische Herzogkirche', in *Der heilige Willibald*, ed. by Dickerhof, Reiter, and Weinfurter, pp. 115–42 (pp. 128–29).

<sup>176</sup> On patterns of scattered landholdings, see Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 122–26.

<sup>177</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, pref: 'to all priests or deacons and all leading nobles of the church'.

<sup>178</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, pref.

<sup>179</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 11 and c. 13.

of the eighth century. Frisia's leading 'opponent' of the missions was the pagan leader Radbod.<sup>180</sup> Radbod is one of the many characters of the age whose reputation seems inexorably bound to the sheer accident of having sided against Charles Martel. In 711 Radbod's family was united with the Pippinids when his daughter married Grimoald II, the legitimate son of Pippin II.<sup>181</sup> He was also described in contemporary chronicles as a 'dux', implying at least his complicity with the Frankish political scene if not his real status.<sup>182</sup> But things soon deteriorated with the murder of Grimoald in Liège and the death of Pippin in 714. Ragamfred bolstered his position by making a treaty (*foedus*) with Radbod, and the pair marched on Cologne.<sup>183</sup> At this point Radbod and Charles were simply rival, powerful aristocrats in the Frankish orbit, as their titles suggested.<sup>184</sup> In the *Vita Bonifatii*, however, the dispute was transformed into a fight between two kingdoms, with 'king' Radbod's army — for the first time described as pagan — now accused of claiming churches in Frisia which had been under Frankish *imperium* (presumably Utrecht and possibly Dorestad).<sup>185</sup> Radbod's fall from grace now left him recast by Carolingian historians as an outsider. His death in 719 and the successful missionary work of Boniface and Willibrord subsequently had the effect in Willibald's story of strengthening Charles Martel's authority in the region, again using the word *imperium*.<sup>186</sup> A different but complementary rhetoric was employed by Alcuin, who placed Radbod — again an evil pagan king rather than *dux* — 'ultra Francorum regni fines' in Utrecht.<sup>187</sup> Political sympathies and conversion narratives meant

<sup>180</sup> For a revision of Radbod's career, see Wolfert S. van Egmond, 'Radbod van de Friezen, een aristocraat in de periferie', *Millennium: Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse studies*, 19 (2005), 24–44.

<sup>181</sup> *Liber historiae Francorum*, c. 50; *Fredegarii Chronica*, c. 7; *Annales Mettenses priores*, s.a. 711.

<sup>182</sup> *Liber historiae Francorum*, c. 52; *Fredegarii Chronica*, c. 9.

<sup>183</sup> *Liber historiae Francorum*, c. 52; *Fredegarii Chronica*, c. 9; *Annales Mettenses priores*, s.a. 716. The minor annals all mention only Charles and Radbod fighting, helping to demonize Radbod: *Annales sancti Amandi*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 1 (Hannover, 1826), s.a. 716; *Annales Tiliani*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 1 (Hannover, 1826), s.a. 716; *Annales Petaviani*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 1 (Hannover, 1826), s.a. 716.

<sup>184</sup> Van Egmond, 'Radbod', pp. 32–33.

<sup>185</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 4.

<sup>186</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 5. Radbod's death was widely reported: *Annales sancti Amandi*, s.a. 719; *Annales Tiliani*, s.a. 719; *Annales Petaviani*, s.a. 719; *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a. 719; *Annales Alemannici*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 1 (Hannover, 1826), s.a. 719; *Annales Nazariani*, s.a. 719.

<sup>187</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, cc. 5 and 9: 'beyond the borders of the Franks'.

that Radbod gained a reputation as an anti-Christian outsider, in contrast to the earlier portrayal of him as simply a duke on the periphery.

The story of Radbod and the Pippinids provides a significant context for the landholdings of Willibrord in Toxandria.<sup>188</sup> Toxandria lay between the lands of the Pippinids and Radbod, and the generosity of the family of Bertilindis made Willibrord a significant personal landholder in the region.<sup>189</sup> These gave Willibrord a foothold on the outskirts of his projected mission field, but it was also more than that.<sup>190</sup> Charters for the area have a distinctive character which suggests an awkward meeting of local practices and Frankish legal structures.<sup>191</sup> One implication of this situation is that the local aristocracy had only recently decided to put their lot in with the Franks. It is possible to imagine this shift in allegiance being a move away from a Frisian affiliation.<sup>192</sup> In the light of Radbod's demonstrable cooperation with Frankish nobles between 711 and 717, however, it may be significant that the majority of the Toxandrian grants also fall into the period 709–17.<sup>193</sup> This was a time when there was growing cooperation and integration in the world between Utrecht and Trier, not a time when a 'Frisian kingdom' squared up to a Frankish one. The precise nature of Willibrord's political role here is unclear. The fact that Willibrord received lands directly makes one wonder whether the Toxandrian aristocracy deliberately avoided patronizing Pippinid Echternach, although similar features in the Werden charters might suggest that it was simply practice in some regions to give land to people rather than to inanimate buildings.<sup>194</sup> Willibrord appears well placed both as someone to help the Toxandrians integrate

<sup>188</sup> On these charters, see Werner, *Die Lütticher Raum*, pp. 139–58; Augustine van Berkum, 'Willibrord, de reizende geloofsverkondiger', in *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande*, ed. by Kiesel and Schroeder, pp. 69–95; Theuws, 'Landed Property and Manorial Organisation', esp. pp. 307–37; Costambeys, 'An Aristocratic Community'.

<sup>189</sup> On the family, see Werner, *Die Lütticher Raum*, pp. 140–48; Costambeys, 'An Aristocratic Community', pp. 44–45.

<sup>190</sup> Werner, *Die Lütticher Raum*, p. 158.

<sup>191</sup> Costambeys, 'An Aristocratic Community', pp. 54–55.

<sup>192</sup> As suggested in Costambeys, 'An Aristocratic Community', pp. 60–61.

<sup>193</sup> Echternach, nos 16, 17, 21, 22, 24.

<sup>194</sup> Liudger's charters are edited in *De oudste particuliere oorkonden van het klooster Werden: Een diplomatische studie*, ed. by Dirk Peter Blok (Assen, 1960), nos 1–31. The only charter to give land to a church rather than Liudger or his relic collection is no. 29, a grant of land by one Raadald to Liudger's ecclesia in Wichmond, half way between Utrecht and Münster.

with the Franks and as someone capable of integrating Pippinid authority in a frontier region.<sup>195</sup>

The most famous Frisian family of the eighth century was that of the Wursings or, as a family of bishops, Liudgeriden. Their history is first described by Altfrid of Münster (d. 849), who was himself a member of that family. He told of how in the days of Radbod — here again a *rex* rather a *dux* — a nobleman called Wursing fled to Grimoald and received Christianity.<sup>196</sup> In his later years, however, Radbod fell ill and negotiated the return of the Wursings, although the majority of the family remained in Frankia until after Radbod had died.<sup>197</sup> Altfrid explicitly associates this development with the establishment of Willibrord at Utrecht, in keeping with the traditions which place Willibrord's major Frisian work after 719.<sup>198</sup> From a different family, Willibrord was given the boys Willibracht and Thiadbracht to educate as the first native clergy of Frisia. These brothers were the uncles of Liafburg, who married Wursing's son Thiadgrim and later gave birth to Liudger himself. The genealogical background as supplied by Altfrid had a dual function: as well as establishing the noble background of the saint, it also helped to identify a spiritual community of related peoples.<sup>199</sup> Liudger's brother Hildigrim (d. 827) was Bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, his sister Heriburg was Abbess of Nottuln, his nephews Gerfrid (d. 839) and Thiadgrim (d. 840) were bishops of Münster and Halberstadt respectively, and thereafter bishops Altfrid of Münster, Altfrid of Hildesheim (d. 874), and Hildigrim of Halberstadt (d. ?885) were also relatives.<sup>200</sup> While no individual reached the stature of Liudger himself, the family played a substantial role in the development of the Church in Saxony and were celebrated in the three different versions of the *Vita Liudgeri* that emerged in the ninth century.<sup>201</sup>

Although concerned with family history, the stories of the Liudgeriden integrated their story with that of the Anglo-Saxon missions. Of the family, Altfrid

<sup>195</sup> Theuws, 'Landed Property and Manorial Organisation', pp. 332–33.

<sup>196</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 1–2.

<sup>197</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 3. For a more detailed story about Radbod's death, see *Vita Vulframi*, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM, 5 (Hannover, 1910), c. 10. Radbod's death possibly did not end the uncertainty in the region: van Egmond, 'Radbod', pp. 40–41.

<sup>198</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 5; Alcuin, *VW*, c. 9; *Vita Vulframi*, c. 9.

<sup>199</sup> Schmid, 'Die "Liudgeriden"'. See more expansively von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*.

<sup>200</sup> Schmid, 'Die "Liudgeriden"', pp. 79–86.

<sup>201</sup> Eberhard Kaus, 'Zu den Liudger-Viten'. It is clear that the family element in the *Vitae Liudgeri* diminished with each rewriting.

wrote 'habuitque progenies illa magnam familiariatem cum sancto Willibrordo nec non et cum Bonefacio'.<sup>202</sup> The *Vita secunda Liudgeri* of the 850s went further and opened with the Anglo-Saxon missions to provide the context for the story of Wursing.<sup>203</sup> For both writers it was important to establish Liudger as an heir to the Anglo-Saxon missionary endeavour. Surprisingly in this context, Willibrord was never developed as a proper hagiographical character, either in the *vitae* about Gregory and Liudger, or in a *vita* of his own. Liudger, despite having read the *Vita Willibrordi*, gave only the bare essentials:

In Fresonia [. . .] primus sanctus Willibrordus cognomento Clemens archiepiscopus in conversione gentis illius initiavit rudimenta christianae fidei cum discipulis suis. Deinde senescente eo in opere Dei, et stabilito episcopatu in loco qui nuncupatur Traiectum [. . .] et migrante ad Dominum de hac luce.<sup>204</sup>

This, apart from his work with Willibracht and Thiadbracht, is as much detail as we ever hear in the Frisian *vitae* of Willibrord's activities. The curiosity comes in the implication that Willibrord was buried in Utrecht rather than Echternach, as Alcuin's text had told him.<sup>205</sup> The *Vita altera Bonifatii* constructs a similar picture of Willibrord, saying in typically odd fashion that 'Willibrordus [. . .] magnus christiane religionis propagator et iste de quo agimus ammirabilis Bonifacius multique alii, quos in libro Hystorie Anglorum virtutibus claruisse Beda commemorat'.<sup>206</sup> He later also gives the impression that Boniface found Willibrord's body in a monastery in Utrecht.<sup>207</sup> The general impression of Willibrord in the Frisian *vitae* is of a man remembered exclusively as the first person to evangelize the Frisian

<sup>202</sup> Alfrid, *VLger*, I. 5: 'and the family had great familiarity with St Willibrord and no less with Boniface'.

<sup>203</sup> *Vita Liudgeri secunda*, I. 1.

<sup>204</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 10: 'In Frisia the foremost saint Archbishop Willibrord, also called Clemens, with his disciples initiated the conversion of the people with the rudiments of the Christian faith. Then, as an old man in the work of God, he established his bishopric in Utrecht and died.' On Liudger's knowledge of the *Vita Willibrordi*, see Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 111–12.

<sup>205</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 24.

<sup>206</sup> *VaB*, c. 6: 'Willibrord was a great propagator of the Christian faith and one whom we think of as being among Boniface and the many other admirable people whom Bede recalled to illuminate virtues in his book on the history of the English.' An odd sentence in which to include Boniface, maybe, but it could be that the author had seen a copy of the *HE* with the *Continuatio Bedae* attached.

<sup>207</sup> *VaB*, c. 15.



people with an emphasis on his connection with Utrecht.<sup>208</sup> The spiritual family of the Liudgeriden could benefit through association with this story because it projected their prominence to the very beginnings of Christian Frisia.<sup>209</sup>

The evidence for concrete dealings between Boniface and the Liudgeriden is less apparent than it is for Willibrord. Liudger claimed that Boniface had spent time working in Woerden, Achttienhoven, and Velzen, all between Utrecht and the sea to the west.<sup>210</sup> It is thought that these were lands owned by the Liudgeriden, with Velzen — described as being ‘propior [. . .] gentilibus et paganis’ — possibly marking the western extent of Christianity in the region, or at least the Frisian territory dominated by families like Liudger’s. Velzen is significant because a charter of Charles Martel to Echternach records Willibrord’s use of the church there.<sup>211</sup> There is nothing implausible about Boniface working so far north, only Liudger’s claim that he spent three years doing so, followed by a further ten in the area around Utrecht. Willibald claimed that Boniface only spent three years in Frisia — 719–21 — and redating all his work in Hesse and Thuringia to after 731 is made difficult by the letters in the Bonifatian collection which clearly describe work there earlier.<sup>212</sup> Liudger’s claim is most likely part of his wider literary strategy to integrate the saintly work of Boniface into his own socio-geographical world. While Willibrord’s work produced numerous disciples in the region, Boniface’s only named follower is an otherwise unattested student called Gemberht ‘cognomente Gebbo’ from Achttienhoven. Liudger’s history appears to compensate for the lack of social interaction Boniface had actually had in the region by stretching what was known as far as possible.

<sup>208</sup> The limited image might also stem from Willibrord’s lack of work beyond the River Lek: Heinz Löwe, ‘Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius: Ihre Bedeutung für die Missionsgeschichte ihrer Zeit’, in *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters*, ed. by Schäferdiek, I, 192–226 (pp. 201–04); Fritze, ‘Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Bistums Utrecht’, pp. 109–10; Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, p. 151.

<sup>209</sup> Hauck, ‘Apostolischer Geist’, pp. 192–96; von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, pp. 102–03, 138–39.

<sup>210</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 2.

<sup>211</sup> Echternach, no. 39. The charter is traditionally dated 714x739 but the references to Willibrord as ‘sanctus’ suggest either the twelfth-century scribe suddenly started embellishing his text or that it belongs to the period 739x741.

<sup>212</sup> See especially *Die Briefe*, nos 17, 19, 20, 24, 25. Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 116, argues that Liudger must have misread Willibald’s statement, although there is considerable visual difference between ‘tres’ and ‘tresdecim’ which remains to be accounted for.

The Frisian and Franconian aristocracies had in general come to adopt the Anglo-Saxon saints as their own. Just like further south and east, Willibrord and Boniface were able to enter the society of a foreign land with great success, becoming outsiders more in spirit than in practical reality. It was in Frisia, however, that they were most associated with Frankish overlordship. The hagiographical legends developed over time to denigrate the authority of Duke Radbod and to celebrate the Frankish Christian *imperium*. The saints were figures more personal to the communities of the North, who always maintained a separate identity from their neighbours. Thus the saints, both in life and in death, were not figures to be rejected as representative of Frankish authority, but people who were rather intermediary characters around whom semi-independent legends could be developed.

### *Conclusion*

The successes of the Anglo-Saxon missions relied on the ability of individuals to attract patronage and engage with the developing political structures of the Frankish 'imperium'. Although they traded on their status as outsiders to spiritual effect, the Willibrords and Bonifaces had to operate within the system in order to obtain the necessary power to be able to do anything. It is no coincidence that the missions and the rise of the Pippinids proceeded contemporaneously: they were able to feed off each other, using both their material and spiritual capital to good effect. A Christian *imperium* needed such cooperation. But perhaps because of the tensions between being both insiders and outsiders, aspects of the Anglo-Saxons' work depended on wider discourses. Willibrord could appear both independent in Toxandria and a harbinger of Pippinid overlordship without this contradiction negating his advantages. The cult of Boniface could provide dissident Thuringians with a neutral intercessor, but also one for whom their enemies had the deepest reverence. The saints could be appropriated for a variety of causes, but it was often difficult to dictate a single political colouring for figures so intrinsically set apart from worldliness in their spirit.

The example of the dissident Thuringians is part of a more fundamental process in which those who wielded secular power — or wished to — became willing consumers and exploiters of the legends. Hagiography and the cult of saints was a very real part of Frankish political culture, as it was elsewhere; it was not just an excuse for populist activities and the literary games of clerics. There is no more powerful illustration of this than the speed with which the rich families who dominated the Middle Rhine valley rushed to bestow gifts on Fulda in the weeks after Boniface's

death. Their generosity was not weakness in the face of *Kultenpropaganda*, but rather a proactive move in the reshaping of a locality's Christian identity. The family of Liudger illustrates similar attitudes in its moves to blend nobility and the saints in a variety of different ways, both reimagining the family as a spiritual unit and challenging aristocratic values. Stimulating such veneration was a primary factor in establishing the reputation of the missions, assuring that vigorous cults of saints were able to develop across the Germanic Frankish world.

## PAGANISMS AND OTHERNESS

The missionary aspects of the work undertaken by the Anglo-Saxons on the continent meant that the challenge to pagan and folk traditions contributed to the definition of their achievements.<sup>1</sup> Pagan customs and beliefs did not just represent the antithesis of the missionaries' own values, but also threatened eternal damnation for their perceived kinfolk who had not yet converted. Sympathy for pagan kin could consequently seem in short supply because of the cultural tensions involved in mission; there was no place for good pagans, Saxons or otherwise. The close association between paganism and political and military frontiers also helped to frame religious interaction and the preconceptions of those involved in it. Even the most triumphant of conversion narratives were imbued with a sense of adversity, if only to make the victories all the more grand. The very idea of studying 'paganism' remains deeply problematical. There are few clear pagan voices in the sources, and these are at best only reflections of practice rather than pagan cosmologies.<sup>2</sup> Distinctions between pagan, folk, secular, and even some

<sup>1</sup> *The Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. by Ludo Milis (Woodbridge, 1998); Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface'; Lutz E. von Padberg, 'Christen und Heiden: Zur Sicht des Heidentums in ausgewählter angelsachsen und fränkischer Überlieferung des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts', in *Iconologia Sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. by Hagen Keller and Nickolaus Staubach, *Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung*, 23 (Berlin, 1994), pp. 291–312; Ian Wood, 'Pagan Religion and Superstition East of the Rhine from the Fifth to the Ninth Centuries', in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. by Giorgio Ausenda (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 253–79; Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1979); James T. Palmer, 'Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World', *EME*, 15 (2007), 402–25.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, 'Pagan Religion', p. 255.

Christian practices are also often oblique, and there is a tangible sense of struggle, adaptation, and interpretation. Even the evidence of sermons, some of which purportedly came from the circles of Boniface, is a poor guide to practical religious confrontation.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will focus on interpretations of these belief structures rather than missionary activities themselves, in order to establish the role of paganism in the historical representations of missions.<sup>4</sup>

One thing we must be clear about from the outset is that there was no simple interaction between Christian missionaries and people who believed in some kind of 'pan-Germanic paganism'. 'Paganism' as a category is simply a Christian construct established to create a dichotomy between civilized, urban Christianity and the beliefs and practices of people in the countryside; it does not refer to a specific set of beliefs, but rather to an adherence to things which are not Christian. Moreover, the concept of 'pan-Germanic' culture is as problematic as the concept of 'Germanic' encountered in Chapter 1; as Hilda Ellis Davidson warned us, we must not suppose there was 'a fixed and permanent heathen faith possessed by the Germanic world'.<sup>5</sup> Some people may well have believed in Woden, Thor, and other familiar days-of-the-week gods, and indeed these gods are mentioned together in an Old Saxon baptismal formula found in a ninth-century manuscript from Fulda.<sup>6</sup> Such beliefs, however, are not as well attested for this period as we might suppose, with the sources often at best giving only a vague sense of localized practices.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Von Padberg, *Inszenierung*, with a short sketch of the problems of the sources at pp. 14–18.

<sup>4</sup> On the missionary strategies of the Anglo-Saxons, see Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*; Jane B. Stevenson, 'Christianising the Northern Barbarians', in *Nordsjøen: Handel, religion og politikk*, ed. by J. F. Krøger and H.-R. Naley, Karmøyseminaret 1994 og 1995 (Stavanger, 1996), pp. 162–84; Richard Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 705–40.

<sup>5</sup> Hilda R. Ellis Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, 8th edn (London, 1975), p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Indiculus superstitionum*, ed. by Georg H. Pertz, MGH Leges, 1 (Hannover, 1831), p. 19. The context of late Saxon mission seems most likely (von Padberg, *Inszenierung*, pp. 207–09). For an overview of the debate over whether the text belongs to the time of Boniface or Charlemagne, see Michael Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: Zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs*, Freiburger Beiträge zur Mittelalterlichen Geschichte, 17 (Frankfurt-am-Main, 2005), pp. 439–55 (here favouring early composition, although this remains entirely impossible to prove on the available evidence). In the Carolingian period, Woden seems to have been of more interest to the Lombards and Paul the Deacon in particular: *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SRL, 1 (Hannover, 1878), c. 1; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, ed. by Ludwig Bethmann and Georg Waitz, MGH SRL, 1 (Hannover, 1878), I. 8–10.

<sup>7</sup> See the well-intentioned but flawed efforts of Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, CSASE, 22 (Cambridge, 1997) to move away from *Wochentagsgötter* to a wider

There are numerous references in early medieval Christian texts to pagan beliefs in Roman gods such as Mercury, and these have often been translated by modern historians into their supposed Germanic equivalents following Tacitus's reference to the practice of *interpretatio Romana*.<sup>8</sup> It is important to ask to what extent such practices should affect the reading of our sources here, particularly where literary borrowings and motifs impose on text and structure. One might also be wary of projecting beliefs back from the evidence of substantially later 'pagan' sagas such as those of the Christian poet Snorri Sturluson (d. 1241), as many have done.<sup>9</sup> The problem of such back-projection, as with *interpretatio Romana*, is that it posits long-term cultural stabilities which are neither evident in the source materials nor in keeping with perceiving society as a set of dynamic, changing structures. The study of mission has in this respect benefited from anthropology and the model of 'enculturation', which explicitly seeks to incorporate fluidity.<sup>10</sup> Pagan societies did not simply adopt the culture of the missionaries, but rather went through a process of negotiation and adaptation in which ways of life were transformed into something familiarly Christian but nonetheless new.<sup>11</sup> It is not a simple conflict between two religious systems, but rather a complicated set of interchanges over a long period of time.

Because of the wider cultural debates involved in the Anglo-Saxons' challenge to paganism, it will be important to examine some of the related questions which arise about 'otherness' and frontiers. At the heart of the apostolic decree — at least on some readings — was a directive to break through the edges of the known world.<sup>12</sup>

appreciation of nature cults. On the problem of interpreting the *Wochentagsgötter* in relation to pagan beliefs, see Christine Fell, 'Paganism in Beowulf: A Semantic Fairy-tale', in *Pagans and Christians: The Interplay Between Christian Latin and Traditional Germanic Cultures in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Tette Hofstra, Luke A. J. R. Houwen, and Alasdair A. MacDonald, Germania Latina, 2 (Groningen, 1995), pp. 9–34 (pp. 18–19).

<sup>8</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, c. 43. See the contradictory comments of David R. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London, 1992), pp. 2–3, who urges scholars to treat Tacitus with caution and then proceeds without doing so.

<sup>9</sup> Fell, 'Paganism in Beowulf', pp. 9–10; R. I. Page, 'Anglo-Saxon Paganism: The Evidence of Bede', in *Pagans and Christians*, ed. by Hofstra, Houwen, and MacDonald, pp. 99–129 (pp. 99–100). Both cite Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, pp. 22–30, as a prime offender.

<sup>10</sup> Richter, 'Models of Conversion'.

<sup>11</sup> Martine de Reu, 'The Missionaries: The First Contacts Between Paganism and Christianity', in *Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. by Milis, pp. 13–37 (pp. 13–16, 19–22).

<sup>12</sup> Some interpretations saw the 'ends of the earth' as the ends of civilized society, i.e. the Roman Empire not the whole world: see Cranz, 'De civitate Dei XV. 2', and Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio'. See below, pp. 136–37.

It was a short move from engaging with the otherworldliness of non-Christians to imagining exotic and dangerous worlds which further showed up the challenges and failures of the 'civilized' centre. This is not to say, of course, that such otherness is necessarily 'pagan'.<sup>13</sup> In an instructive section from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, much read in the eighth and ninth centuries, the Spanish bishop's information on pagans quickly moved from their 'origins' near Athens to a list of the *dei silvestres* and other fabulous creatures one could encounter in the writings of Virgil and others.<sup>14</sup> Isidore may not have been writing about Germanic paganism, but understandings of classical paganism and its literary heritage undoubtedly shaped the ways that many Christians approached the issue in general. There were certainly non-Christian beliefs held by the people who lived beyond the frontier, but the category of paganism in medieval texts also formed part of a much wider set of internal issues created by the clashes of education, imagination, experience, and uncertainty.

### *Investigating Paganisms*

The problems posed by the source material necessitate careful consideration of how we might go about defining 'paganisms'. One popular approach is to combine literary and archaeological sources.<sup>15</sup> For many modern writers archaeological evidence has been asked to speak for those with non-Christian beliefs. In some cases it can be used tentatively to identify places, artefacts, and imagery of pagan significance. Karl Hauck's studies on the symbolism of pagan gold bracteates proved particularly influential for a time for his attempts to reconstruct a pagan cosmology out of symbolism and imagined rituals.<sup>16</sup> The temptation is to use the documentary and archaeological evidence together in the hope that comparison will help the

<sup>13</sup> Fell, 'Paganism in Beowulf', p. 21 and p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, ed. by Wallace M. Lindsay, *Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis* (Oxford, 1911), VIII. 10–11.

<sup>15</sup> Alain Dierkens, 'The Evidence of Archaeology', in *Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. by Milis, pp. 39–64.

<sup>16</sup> Representative of Hauck's oeuvre is his *Goldbrakteaten aus Sievern: Spätantike Amulett-Bilder der 'Dania Saxonica' und die Sachsen-'Origo' bei Widukind von Corvey*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften, 1 (Munich, 1970). See the essays in *Iconologia Sacra*, ed. by Keller and Staubach, and Wallace-Hadrill's comments in his *Frankish Church*, p. 17. For some judicious criticisms of Hauck's project, see Ian Wood, 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600–800', in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. by Ní Chatháin and Richter, pp. 347–61 (p. 361).



historian or archaeologist to create an accurate synthesis. In following such an approach care is needed to allow both the documentary and archaeological sources to be interpreted in themselves, rather than necessarily allowing the approaches of one discipline to dictate the investigation of the other.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, although individually the two kinds of evidence can be used to obtain relatively coherent pictures of medieval paganism — bearing in mind that the ‘coherence’ itself relies upon limited source materials and the interpreter — it can be difficult to see where those pictures overlap.

St Anskar’s missions to Scandinavia between 829 and 865 provide us with a useful case study where there is much clear documentary and archaeological evidence that could be used to look at paganism in that region. Anskar was a Frankish missionary, the first Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, and someone fully aware of his debt to his Anglo-Saxon predecessors. His career was recorded by Rimbert of Hamburg-Bremen, the saint’s pupil and successor, in the *Vita Anskarii* of c. 870.<sup>18</sup> Rimbert recorded that Anskar preached in the predominantly pagan Scandinavian ports of Hedeby in Denmark and Birka in Sweden, ports from which we have plenty of ninth-century material evidence.<sup>19</sup> For religion, the material evidence largely comes from graves or other deposits that could be interpreted as ‘offerings’. Graves and their associated goods can be difficult to interpret. Extensive studies of burials in Birka, for example, offer few cases that can be labelled ‘Christian’ or ‘pagan’ with any certainty.<sup>20</sup> The resulting picture is one of a community with mixed religious views where syncretism was widespread. To a certain degree Rimbert offers a similar image. He described, for example, how the people of Birka were divided over the introduction of Christianity, and how they even held a series of town meetings to discuss their religious options.<sup>21</sup> All our evidence points to syncretism in Birka, but graves do not tell us about town meetings, and Rimbert does not mention Swedish burial practices. The two kinds of sources cannot be said

<sup>17</sup> On the problems of using archaeological and historical evidence together — although with an unduly negative portrayal of history as a discipline — see Moreland, *Archaeology and Text*.

<sup>18</sup> The text is highly complicated and can be read on a number of levels: see Wood, ‘Christians and Pagans’; Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 123–34; Palmer, ‘Rimbert’s *Vita Anskarii*’.

<sup>19</sup> For Hedeby, see Herbert Jankuhn, *Haithabu* (Neumünster, 1986); on Ribe, see Stig Jensen, *The Vikings of Ribe*, trans. by Geoffrey Bibby (Ribe, 1991); on Birka, see *Early Investigations and Future Plans*, ed. by Björn Ambrosiani and Helen Clarke, Birka Studies, 1 (Stockholm, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Ann-Sofie Gräslund, *The Burial Customs: A Study of the Graves of Birka*, Birka, 4 (Stockholm, 1982).

<sup>21</sup> Rimbert, *VA*, cc. 26–27.

with any certainty to refer to the same historical processes, and could even be said to have different ontological statuses. The relationship between the fragmentary documentary and archaeological evidence can often be loose at best.

The problem of finding alternatives to Christian narratives such as saints' Lives as sources for paganism is even more stark when we look at the Anglo-Saxon missions in Germany. While Hedeby and Birka declined in the century after Anskar's mission and, apart from some ploughing, remained largely undisturbed and rural, many of the centres of Boniface's mission are now major urban centres. Within those sites the Anglo-Saxons' churches have left few traces, sometimes because of extensive rebuilding, sometimes because of reasons it is impossible to infer.<sup>22</sup> The sites in which Boniface and his circle worked can reveal something of the Anglo-Saxons' strategies, and these can be related to the hagiographical representations of paganism with care, particularly in the cases of Boniface at Geismar and Wynnebald at Sualaveld. What we cannot reconstruct is a counter-representation of paganism in places like Hesse and Thuringia independent of the Bonifatian polemic.

Studying the portrayals of paganism in *vitae* has often proved controversial. There are three main problems with the documentary evidence for early medieval paganism: the exclusively Christian-theological nature of the documentary sources; the attempts within those sources to understand Germanic paganism in terms of Roman culture; and also the fact that many sources reveal an ambivalence towards certain 'acceptable' pagan practices. With regards to the first of these problems, Lutz von Padberg has argued that Christian sources presented paganism as a unified religion, despite its localized varieties, in order to help define heathen beliefs clearly in terms of what Christianity was not.<sup>23</sup> Missionaries sought to eliminate paganisms, not understand them. Where references are made to specific gods they are often to the old Roman gods rather than Germanic ones. Gregory of Tours, for example, wrote that Clovis I worshipped Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury.<sup>24</sup> The imposition of classical frames of reference is a problem for modern audiences, but many have nevertheless agreed with Michael Wallace-Hadrill's line that if the Franks did not worship Woden then they probably worshipped 'a god remarkably like him'.<sup>25</sup> The greatest problem is that there is simply little solid documentary evidence for Germanic

<sup>22</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments'; Parsons, 'Some Churches'. For a city with more evidence, see Wamers, *Die frühmittelalterlichen Lesefunde*.

<sup>23</sup> Von Padberg, 'Christen und Heiden', esp. pp. 294–96.

<sup>24</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Decim libri historiarum*, ed. by Wilhelm Arndt, MGH SRM, 1 (Hannover, 1885), II. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 22.

paganism in the two centuries before Boniface. Robert Markus has brought attention to the particularly poor evidence of the seventh century and has suggested that many Christians were more lenient towards rustic practices and festivals; thereafter, Boniface's hard-line approach to such things marked the beginning of a new, vigorous age for Christianity and the 'end of Ancient Christianity'.<sup>26</sup> Boniface appears angry in his letters about the standards of his time but — if we set aside his exaggeration<sup>27</sup> — it is impossible to observe precisely how continental Christianity developed by incorporating any pagan and secular elements. We must understand better the perceptions of the missionaries before approaching their opponents.

### *Paganism in Southern and Central Germany*

If one ignores for a moment the evidence of hagiography, genuine encounters with pagans in the southern mission fields can be hard to find. Daniel of Winchester wrote to Boniface with advice on how to convert pagans using logical arguments, such as pointing out that Christians tended to own richer and more fertile lands; whether Boniface found this a useful strategy, however, is unknown.<sup>28</sup> The advice, despite its slightly abstract logical form, fits a wider attitude of appealing to the 'carnal minds' of the laity. Time and again, Christian missionaries failed to make an impact because they dressed in rags or curtailed the economic well-being of potential converts.<sup>29</sup> It was partly for such reasons that Alcuin urged Charlemagne not to enforce tithes on the Saxons: people preferred deities who brought prosperity.<sup>30</sup> Such considerations take into account human nature rather than pagan beliefs. Boniface, too, spoke pragmatically. There was no way to defend the Church and fight the 'ritus paganorum et sacrilegia idolorum in Germania', he argued, without the mandate and fear of Charles Martel.<sup>31</sup> Coercion could have its place.

On paganism itself, the Bonifatian correspondence communicates a variety of clichés and folk practices. Daniel wrote only vaguely of sacrifices and the *cultura*

<sup>26</sup> Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface', esp. pp. 158, 166–68.

<sup>27</sup> For a reassessment of Boniface's accusations against the Merovingian Church, see the essays in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel, *Die Briefe*, no. 23; von Padberg, *Inszenierung*, pp. 322–27.

<sup>29</sup> Stevenson, 'Christianising', p. 179; Robert Bartlett, 'The Conversion of a Pagan Society in the Middle Ages', *History*, 70 (1985), 185–201 (p. 198).

<sup>30</sup> For Alcuin's concerns, see Alcuin, *Epistolae*, nos 107, 110, 111.

<sup>31</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 63: 'the rites of pagans and the sacrilege of idols in *Germania*'.

*idolorum*, a common turn of phrase in the early Church on which few writers elaborated.<sup>32</sup> In the late seventh century, Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury's *Poenitentiale* — aimed, of course, at correcting the behaviour of Christians — bracketed together an odd assortment of practices under the same heading, including sacrifices to demons, auguries, and divinations, but also using furnaces to cure fevers and burning grain near graves.<sup>33</sup> *Cultura idolorum* referred to a Christian catch-all idea, not any specific practice. More often than not the phrase is used in admonitory contexts. Gregory II, for example, wrote to the Germans and Thuringians in the same terms, warning them about the same cultivation of idols and the pagans like brute beasts who refused to recognize Christ.<sup>34</sup> His words to the Thuringians are of particular interest because this was supposed to be a region long touched by Christianity after St Kilian had preached at Würzburg in the 680s and converted the ducal family.<sup>35</sup> But, as Isidore had suggested, idols were as much to do with sacrilegious practices as pagan ones.<sup>36</sup> News reached Gregory III of a strange mixture of religious practices in 732, when he had to order the rebaptism of people baptized by a priest who also made sacrifices to 'Jupiter'.<sup>37</sup> Many modern historians have read 'Thor' for Jupiter because of the story's Germanic provenance, just as they have for the oak tree dedicated to the Roman deity at Geismar (see below).<sup>38</sup> The motivations for classicization need to be considered. Did the papacy simply hear what it wanted to hear squarely within Latin frames of reference? Gregory III echoed his predecessor's language when he wrote to the Old Saxons about the veneration of golden idols made by hand, drawing heavily on biblical quotations and allusions.<sup>39</sup> Boniface also mentions the *cultura idolorum* when

<sup>32</sup> Daniel, *Die Briefe*, no. 23. The *cultura idolorum* is mentioned in I Cor. 10. 14. For consideration of what idols in Germania and Scandinavia might have been, see Alexandra Sanmark, *Power and Conversion: A Comparative Study of Christianization in Scandinavia*, Occasional Papers in Archaeology, 34 (Uppsala, 2004), pp. 157–76.

<sup>33</sup> *Poenitentiale Theodori*, in *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. III, ed. by Arthur Haddan and William Stubbs (Oxford, 1871), I. 15.

<sup>34</sup> *Die Briefe*, nos 17, 19.

<sup>35</sup> On Kilian, see below p. 158 and pp. 240–41; Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 113–14.

<sup>36</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, V. 26.12; Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Gregory III, *Die Briefe*, no. 28.

<sup>38</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Gregory III, *Die Briefe*, no. 21. Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, pp. 518–21, has argued that this letter was written by Gregory II, but I am still inclined to agree with Tangl, 'Studien zur Neuausgabe, Teil I', p. 86, that the whole outlook of the letter seems better to suit the later Gregory.

writing to his correspondents Aldherius and Eadburga, not in terms of describing pagan beliefs, but for literary effect while conjuring up images of ‘tempestates Germanorum’.<sup>40</sup> References to pagan beliefs could be as much artistic as practical. The literary motifs and structures Boniface employed in his letters was all part of his wider strategy of sketching his own stylized impression of the North.

One practical problem Boniface was forced to face was the persistence of stories that people in Rome still performed pagan rites. Despite the occasional impression of frontier communities separated from the centres, people travelled and news spread. In Rome every New Year’s Eve, people feasted and sang boisterous songs, and women sold amulets in the streets.<sup>41</sup> Boniface’s frustration is evident in his choice of words, calling the Alamanni, Bavarians, and Franks who delighted in telling him this ‘homines carnales idiotae’ (‘uneducated carnal men’). His actions are more revealing of his ideas of doctrine and authority than folk practices. He exhorted Pope Zacharias to prohibit the festivities, quoting from a sermon by Bishop Caesarius of Arles (d. 543) — here mistakenly attributed to St Augustine of Hippo — about the waste of people who give to the Church but who still believe in magic and pagan rituals.<sup>42</sup> Paganism often seems to be more about behaviour than belief. The principle of eradicating non-Christian practices was not enough in itself; it was better supported by the words of past authorities. The sermons of Caesarius were of particular importance because they underpinned many of the statements made against paganism in later sermons and legislation.<sup>43</sup> Zacharias agreed with Boniface’s words ‘quia omnia haec abscisa esse a patribus sumus edocti’.<sup>44</sup> The Pope also makes reference to a ban issued by his predecessor Gregory (although it is not clear which one). The Christians in Rome had made efforts to ban pagan traditions but it seems that at other times people had felt more ambivalent to non-Christian festivities and practices.<sup>45</sup>

Boniface’s own position on the frontiers of the Frankish world reminds us that paganism was, literally, the religion of the countryside. One of Boniface’s messengers

<sup>40</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 38 and no. 65. See Chapter 1 above, pp. 51–52.

<sup>41</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 50.

<sup>42</sup> Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, pp. 411–13.

<sup>43</sup> See Harmening, *Superstitio*, esp. pp. 126–28, on the question of Boniface’s use of the sermon here.

<sup>44</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 51: ‘because we are taught that all such practices were banished by the fathers’.

<sup>45</sup> Markus, ‘From Caesarius to Boniface’, pp. 167–68. On the problem earlier, see Markus, *End of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 125–35.

reported to Zacharias that Erfurt was an ‘*urbs paganorum rusticorum*’ (‘a city of rustic pagans’) when plans to establish an episcopal see there were first mooted. It is a phrase which conjures up an image of a cultural backwater as much as it suggests non-Christian belief structures. Calling the population of Erfurt ‘*rustici*’ as well thus emphasized that religion was part of a wider problem with engaging with the culture of frontier communities. From Zacharias’s Romano-Greek point of view, Erfurt lacked genuine structure and was best left until it was a stronger Christian centre.<sup>46</sup> The beliefs of the locals themselves were, of course, less interesting than the organizational issues involved, and Zacharias did not feel the need to explain his reservations beyond drawing a contrast between the countryside and the city. The problem for Boniface was that Germany liked the kind of long-standing urban centres with which Zacharias was familiar. Such cultural (mis)understandings went a long way to affecting the course of missionary work.

In a fragmented rural region such as Erfurt, pagan religion and folk superstition were closely related. The most famous example of this is the *Indiculus superstitionum*: a list of non-Christian practices compiled apparently at the Bonifatian councils (742–47) as chapter headings for further discussion.<sup>47</sup> Much of the list is rather oblique: one item is ‘of animal brains’, but what of them we will never know. The list is testament to the multilayered influences on folk beliefs. ‘Of the sacrifice which is offered to any of the saints’ suggests Christian institutions reimagined or imperfectly executed. ‘Of the sacred rites of Mercury and Jupiter’ adds some Roman cults to the mix — two notably found in Acts 14. 11 and mentioned repeatedly in the sermons of Caesarius.<sup>48</sup> Vernacular terms *dadsisas* (a funeral rite), *nimidaz* (a rite of the woods), *nodfyr* (fire made by rubbing sticks), and *yrias* (a pagan course) hint at more specifically Germanic practices. Some items, like sanctuaries, may have been more to do with asserting the functional and judicial roles of the Church against local rival institutions which may even have been secular rather than religious in nature. Peter Brown has commented that the *Indiculus*

<sup>46</sup> See further Chapter 4, p. 155.

<sup>47</sup> *Indiculus superstitionum*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 19–20. Alain Dierkens, ‘Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l’époque mérovingienne – À propos de l’*Indiculus superstitionum et paganorum*’, in *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychologie*, ed. by Hervé Hasquin (Brussels, 1984), pp. 9–26 (pp. 22–23). See also Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, pp. 435–55, for a wider account of the debate. Glatthaar prefers to see a Saxon context for the list, but most scholars would still prefer to see a context relating to the Rhineland. There is some discussion in Harmening, *Superstitio*, and Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1991). See also Palmer, ‘Defining Paganism’, pp. 407–08.

<sup>48</sup> Caesarius, *Sermones*, ed. by Germani Morin, CCSL, 103–04 (Turnhout, 1953), esp. no. 52 and no. 193.

*superstitionum* appears to declare that ‘in effect [...] paganism had ceased to exist’, because it appears concerned with syncretism more than pure paganism.<sup>49</sup> This may push things a little far, but whether or not Boniface and his followers actually encountered any of the practices listed, the *Indiculus* suggests that they expected to have to take on a complex web of different cultural influences.

The evidence which binds the *Indiculus* to Boniface is the text’s parallels with the language of the *Concilium Germanicum* (742). Under Carloman it was decreed

Ut populus Dei paganism non faciat, sed ut omnes spurcitas gentilitatis abiciat et respuat, sive sacrificia mortuorum sive sortilegos vel divinos sive filacteria et auguria sive incantationes sive hostias immolaticias, quas stulti homines iuxta aecclesias ritu pagano faciunt sub nomine sanctorum martyrum vel confessorum Deum et suos sanctos ad iracundiam provocantes, sive illos sacrilegos ignes, quos niedfeor vocant, sive omnes, quaecumque sunt, paganorum observationes diligenter prohibeant.<sup>50</sup>

Here we have ‘niedfeor’ as a variation of ‘nodfyr’ and pagan rites surrounding the cult of saints. A ninth-century Fulda manuscript — the same one which includes the Old Saxon baptismal formula — also contains the list after the provisions of Les Estinnes in a compilation otherwise dominated by council records. The *Indiculus* thus appears in the context of interest in *correctio* rather than mission. Michael Glatthaar has recently brought our attention to the status of these pagan rites as sacrilege.<sup>51</sup> References to sacrilege, defined in part by idolatry and the veneration of Jupiter and Mercury, can be found in the pseudo-Bonifatian sermons and its near-relative the Carolingian ‘Musterpredigt’.<sup>52</sup> Rather than a missionary enterprise, Boniface’s

<sup>49</sup> Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 426.

<sup>50</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 56: ‘that the people of God perform nothing pagan, but reject and cast out all the foulness of the gentiles, such as sacrifices to the dead, casting lots, divinations, amulets and auguries, incantations or offerings to animals, which foolish people perform in churches according to pagan custom, in the name of the saints, martyrs, and confessors, provoking the wrath of God and his saints, and also the sacrilegious fires which they call *niedfeor* and whatever other pagan practices there may be’.

<sup>51</sup> Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, section B.

<sup>52</sup> Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, esp. pp. 562–612, but at times unduly distracted by attempting to make all the sources relate to 742. More helpful analysis can be found in Harmening, *Superstitio*, pp. 157–63, and von Padbert, *Inszenierung*, pp. 195–202. For the text, see Graziano Maioli di S. Teresa, ‘Ramenta Patristica 1: Il florilegio Pseudoagostiniano Palatino’, *Ephemerides Carmeliticae*, 14 (1963), 195–241 (pp. 238–41). The name ‘Musterpredigt’ comes from the sermon’s close correlation with instructions for sermons set out in Charlemagne’s 789 *Admonitio generalis*, ed. by Alfred Boretius, MGH Cap., 1 (Hannover, 1883), c. 82. There are also parallels with Caesarius, *Sermones*, nos 13 and 53.



work challenged many of the pagan practices that he described through the medium of canon law and public assemblies. The problem was not that there were unconverted peoples on the fringes of the Frankish or Christian worlds, but rather that people had converted but maintained their old religious rites in order to celebrate their new beliefs.

Pagan and folk practices supplied a device against which acceptable practices could be illuminated. Nicola Zeddies has shown that Boniface used his challenge to heretics like the charismatic Aldebert to reinforce his own ideas of universality within the Church.<sup>53</sup> Pagans, however, could provide a different kind of example to society. In a letter of c. 746 to Æthelbald of Mercia, Boniface and a number of his leading friends chastized the King for his hedonistic lifestyle, defilement of nuns, and failure to take a wife: 'Quod non solum a christianis, sed etiam a paganis in obprobrium et verecundiam deputatur,' they argued.<sup>54</sup> Here Boniface entered into the realms of Tacitus-style ethnography as *Zeitkritik*. In Old Saxony, defiled virgins and adulteresses might hang themselves and have their bodies burnt, or else — Boniface here echoing Tacitus more directly — they were stripped naked and flogged in the street.<sup>55</sup> Even in the culture of the Wends, a 'genus hominum foedissimum et deterrimum', women refused to outlive their husbands and killed themselves in order to maintain their union.<sup>56</sup> All this information is employed to good rhetorical effect and reinforced by statements that the *gens Anglorum* are considered immoral by the Franks, Italians, and pagans. The strategy is likely the same as Tacitus's: to shame people into reflecting upon their morals through the realization that even barbarians could teach the civilized world about good behaviour. 'Paganism' to the Bonifatian circles had an important rhetorical and moral role to play within their work.

### *The Problem of the 'Oak of Jupiter'*

The most famous hagiographical image of the Anglo-Saxons' encounters with paganism is Boniface's felling of the 'Oak of Jupiter' at Geismar sometime in the

<sup>53</sup> Nicola Zeddies, 'Bonifatius und zwei nützliche Rebellen: die Häretiker Aldebert und Clemens', in *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter: Historische und juristische Studien zur Rebellion*, ed. by Marie T. Fögen (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1995), pp. 217–63.

<sup>54</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 73: 'It is not just held to be a disgrace and shame by Christians, but also by the pagans.'

<sup>55</sup> On this last point, compare Tacitus, *Germania*, c. 19.

<sup>56</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 73: 'a most foul and degenerate race of men'.

720s. Great trees are often associated with pagan mythology.<sup>57</sup> Archaeological finds suggest that Geismar had been an important centre of Germanic population since the Iron Age.<sup>58</sup> It is located on the River Eder near Fritzlar and Büraburg, where Boniface went on to found two churches and a small monastery. Willibald reported that Boniface used wood from the oak tree to build an oratory, and this has been identified with the church at Fritzlar. Fritzlar is, however, located on a steep hill so, rather than carrying the oak to the top, it might be that Fritzlar itself was the site of the pagans' sacred grove.<sup>59</sup> There, the oratory would have been significant to the local population as a symbol of Christianity's triumph over paganism.<sup>60</sup> Establishing a permanent bishopric at nearby Büraburg — a heavily fortified Merovingian fort — would appear to speak of Boniface's attempts to establish a visually meaningful expression of Christian dominance over the locality.

Despite the geographical and physical evidence providing a tangible context for Willibald's claim that Boniface at least Christianized the area and converted certain individuals, the story is highly stylized. After a suggestion that many of the local populace still read entrails and made incantations — claims which run close to the provisions of the councils<sup>61</sup> — Willibald described the event as follows:

[Bonifatius] quendam mirae magnitudinis qui prisco paganorum vocabulo appellatur robor lobis, in loco qui dicitur Gaesmere, servis Dei secum adstantibus, succidere temptavit. Cumque, mentis constantia confortatus, arborem succidisset, — magna quippe aderat copia paganorum, qui et inimicum deorum suorum intra se diligentissime devotabant, — sed ad modicum quidem arbore praeciso, confestim inmensa roboris moles, divino desuper flatu exagitata [...] corruit et quasi superni nutus solatio in quattuor etiam partes disrupta est, et quattuor ingentis magnitudinis aequali longitudine trunci [...]. Quo viso, prius devotantes pagani [...] pristina abiecta maledictione, credentes reddiderunt.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Hilda R. Ellis Davidson, *Myths and Symbols in Pagan Europe: Early Scandinavian and Celtic Religions* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 21–27.

<sup>58</sup> Norbert Wand, *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar: Burg – 'Oppidum' – Bischofssitz in Karolingischer Zeit*, Kasseler Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 4 (Marburg, 1974).

<sup>59</sup> Wand, *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>60</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments', p. 292. On the strategy of reusing pagan sites and Christian churches, see Gregory the Great's advice to Augustine: Bede, *HE*, I. 30.

<sup>61</sup> Wood, 'Pagan Religion', p. 254.

<sup>62</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6: '[Boniface] in their presence attempted to cut down, in a place called Geismar, a certain oak of extraordinary size called in the old tongue of the pagans the Oak of Jupiter. Taking his courage in his hands, for a great crowd of pagans stood watching and bitterly cursing in their hearts the enemy of the gods, he cut the first notch. But when he had made a superficial cut, suddenly the oak's vast bulk, shaken by a mighty blast of wind from above, crashed

The most obvious problem with this passage is the identification of the pagans' oak with the Roman god Jupiter. Some historians have chosen to add their own gloss on the passage, calling the shrine instead the 'Oak of Donar' in order to give it a near-equivalent Germanic name following the principles of *interpretatio Romana*.<sup>63</sup> In the context of hagiography, however, we must be careful about jumping from an apparently literary phrase ('robor Iobis') to an imagined reality (a Germanic shrine). There are too many layers to the story and complexities within the hagiographical motifs to permit such a straight reading of the passage.

A significant problem is presented by the story's resemblance to one told about St Martin of Tours (d. c. 397).<sup>64</sup> Martin, so Sulpicius Severus wrote, had destroyed a pagan temple and was about to cut down a pine tree associated with it when local pagans intervened: although they were happy to see the temple destroyed, it was too much to have the tree felled. In order to prove whether truth lay with the Christian God or the pagan gods, Martin was bound and made to stand by the tree on the grounds that if it crushed him the Christian God was clearly powerless. The tree unexpectedly fell away from Martin after God intervened with a gust of wind; the local populace were impressed enough to convert to Christianity, and Martin vowed to build churches on the site of every pagan temple he destroyed. Echoes of this story might also be found in Gregory the Great's account of St Benedict of Nursia, who was said to have burnt down a pagan grove and built Monte Cassino on the site of a temple dedicated to Mars.<sup>65</sup> In the details of the stories, each is distinctive. The symbolism within the story, however, is identical in the way the

to the ground [...]. As if by the will of God [...] the oak burst asunder into four parts, each part having a trunk of equal length. At the sight of this the heathens [...] ceased to revile and began, on the contrary, to believe and bless the Lord.'

<sup>63</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 75; Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 148; von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, p. 98; Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 421; Mostert, 754, p. 50. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 152 describes the oak as being dedicated to Woden instead. Flint's idea that we can 'legitimately picture' an ancestral hall of fame carved into the tree (*Rise of Magic*, p. 209) is mere fancy.

<sup>64</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Vita s. Martini*, ed. by Jacques Fontaine, SC, 133–35 (Paris, 1967), c. 13; Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, p. 206; Richard M. Price, 'The Holy Man and Christianisation from the Apocryphal Gospels to St Stephen of Perm', in *Cult of Saints*, ed. by Howard-Johnston and Hayward, pp. 215–38 (pp. 241–43); Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 60. On the plausibility of Sulpicius's story in the context of the fourth century, see Stancliffe, *St Martin and his Hagiographer*, pp. 328–40.

<sup>65</sup> Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, ed. by Adalbert de Vogüé, SC, 251, 260, 265 (Paris, 1978–80), II. 8.

felling of the tree moved the pagans to convert and in how the wood was used to build a church in order to create a physical reminder of that conversion. This comparison would presumably have been one Willibald's audience would have been expected to recognize — why else make the comparison? — and fits in the well-attested popularity of Martin and Benedict as saints in the Frankish world. For those steeped in the works of Aldhelm in particular, *De virginitate* had brought attention to those two saints as destroyers of temples.<sup>66</sup> Willibald's Boniface thus conformed to the models of sanctity current in the literary arsenal of the Bonifatian circles.

Since the *Vita Bonifatii* was written at the request of Lull and Megingoz, and thus for the churches of Mainz and Würzburg, it might be expected that the text circulated around the churches under their care.<sup>67</sup> Imitation of the text by Hygeburg in Heidenheim and by Eigil in Fulda certainly suggests that this was the case. The circulation of the text need not, of course, mean the circulation of a manuscript: as Wolfert van Egmond has suggested, preachers who had read the story in one place could recount it (possibly in the vernacular) in another.<sup>68</sup> It is likely that the story was told either as part of the liturgy or as part of other festivities in Fritzlar, Büraburg, and Fulda. The Fulda 'Musterpredigt' still spoke against 'arbores dei Iovis vel Mercurii' in the ninth century, so the ideas did not go away.<sup>69</sup> Hearing the story added a layer of traditional, Christian meaning onto the formerly pagan familiar; it was in the churches, not on the written page, that literate Latin culture met with memorial Germanic culture. In this context, that the landscape was portrayed as pagan need not have been a negative thing: Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* opened when the Anglo-Saxons themselves were still heathens, and the story of their conversion illustrated a spiritual journey with a clear sense of what they were leaving behind.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, if Geismar was 'of more than local significance', then maybe the story would have spoken to audiences in churches across Germany, reaffirming their faith in opposition to the former pagan religious topography. The contexts in which Willibald expected the story to be heard should be remembered,

<sup>66</sup> Aldhelm, *De virginitate (prosa)*, ed. by Rudolf Ehwald, MGH AA, 15 (Hannover, 1913), c. 26 (Martin) and c. 30 (Benedict); Aldhelm, *De virginitate (carmen)*, lines 690–97 (Martin), lines 842–54 (Benedict). See further Palmer, 'Defining Paganism', pp. 411–12.

<sup>67</sup> The *Vita Bonifatii* was at least addressed to Lull and Megingoz: see Willibald, *VB*, c. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Van Egmond, 'Audiences of Early Medieval Hagiographical Texts', p. 64.

<sup>69</sup> *Musterpredigt*, p. 239. See above p. 123.

<sup>70</sup> Patrick Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', in *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, ed. by Geoffrey Rowell (Wantage, 1993), pp. 13–32.

because it was in those places that the meaning would have been conveyed to various audiences, who would then apply it to the world around them.

The literary framework surrounding the 'Oak of Jupiter' story suggests that Willibald was styling Boniface's adventures for effect. Similar problems were raised by Rosamond McKitterick with regards to references to paganism in the seventh-century *Vita Columbani* and *Vita Galli*.<sup>71</sup> Yitzhak Hen has since developed McKitterick's suggestion to argue that Carolingian *vitae* written about Merovingian saints often contained exaggerated accounts of paganism in order to discredit the Merovingians.<sup>72</sup> Stories of paganism could serve as propaganda, legitimizing the Carolingian seizure of the Frankish throne in 751 by denouncing Merovingian society 'as Christian by name but pagan by practice'.<sup>73</sup> It might be prudent to avoid interpreting the *Vita Bonifatii* in the context of a monolithic Carolingian propaganda machine, but rather to see it as part of a more localized dialogue about the Anglo-Saxons' impact on Germany which complemented wider historiographical developments.<sup>74</sup> Willibald may have been referring to paganism in the Merovingian period, but he also portrayed Boniface as working in a land already (nominally) Carolingian; the story of Geismar reflected more upon the old bishops of Mainz and Cologne — of whom Boniface had disapproved — than the Merovingians.<sup>75</sup>

There is good reason to suspect that Willibald was exaggerating the extent of superstitions and pagan practices to emphasize his saint's centrality to local culture. Missionaries may already have been working in the region before Boniface, and Willibald admitted as much.<sup>76</sup> 'Many of the Hessians who at that time had acknowledged the Catholic faith were confirmed', he wrote, before commenting that while many people persisted with pagan practices, 'others, of a more reasonable character, forsook all the profane practices of the Gentiles'.<sup>77</sup> Willibald was not

<sup>71</sup> McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, p. 83.

<sup>72</sup> Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul AD 481–751* (Leiden, 1995), pp. 197–206.

<sup>73</sup> Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 205.

<sup>74</sup> Chapter 2, pp. 84–86.

<sup>75</sup> For example on Cologne, see Mostert, 'Bonifatius als geschiedvervalser'.

<sup>76</sup> Schieffer, *Wifrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 87–88, 146–48; Heinrich Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation des Frankenreiches bis zum Tode Karls der Grossen', in *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, I, 454–87 (pp. 457–58); Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen'.

<sup>77</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6: 'Cum vero Hessorum iam multi, catholica fide subditi ac septiformis spiritus gratia confirmati'. Ibid., c. 6: 'alii etiam, quibus mens sanior inerat, omni abiectat gentilitatis profanatione'.

suggesting that Boniface alone was responsible for leading the Hessians away from paganism. He could not portray Boniface as ‘the saint who converted Hesse’ because he was not writing in a vacuum of memory: in the churches of Fritzlar, Büraburg, and beyond, people would know the story was not true. But Boniface had founded (or at least ‘refounded’) churches and a monastery in the region, so the story also stood in relation to factual and physical reference points. Insofar as paganism in the *Vita Bonifatii* was a device of propaganda, it applied a literate, Christian meaning upon people’s perceptions of the landscape in a context where the cult of Boniface served as a medium for reinforcing that meaning. The story still gave Lull and Megingoz a strong hold over their churches, but in order to consider why Willibald’s story worked it must be considered in the active environments of the Church rather than the passive context of parchment.

### *Wynnebald at Sualaveld*

In the *Vita Wynnebaldi*, Hygeburg joined Mainz’s Willibald in creating a strong impression of pagan beliefs persisting across Southern Germany. The key passage comes in a section on the establishment of monasteries, and reads as follows:

[Wynnebaldus] terram Sualaveldorum inhabitare coepit, plurima paganice pravitatis prestigia, multos diabolice fraude deceptos idolatria colentes, alii aruspicia observantes, alii divinationes demonium dicentes, alii incantationum fribola facientes, alii negromanticas, sed et alios multas, quas nunc longum est enumerare, quas popularie et publice perniciose perficiebant, pro nefas!<sup>78</sup>

Hygeburg then proceeded to complain about the marriage practices of the locals, who allegedly had a habit of marrying close relatives. The passage overall is not without its problems. Phrases in the Latin like ‘plurima paganice pravitatis prestigia’ (‘many corrupt pagan practices’) betray a highly affected Aldhelmian prose style.<sup>79</sup> In other words, the description was tailored by literary stylings rather than the desire to provide an accurate account of pagan beliefs. Moreover the list should

<sup>78</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 7: ‘[H]e began to live in a place called Sualaveld [where there were] many corrupt pagan practices: many inhabitants were deceived by false idols, others observed auspices, others chanted demonic divinations, others made frivolous incantations, others [engaged in] necromancy; but many more (too many to specify now) publicly and popularly performed ruinous rites — for shame!’

<sup>79</sup> On Aldhelmian Latin, including comments on the general influence of Aldhelm on the circle of Boniface, see Orchard, *Poetic Art of Aldhelm*.

be read in comparison with the similar list of Hessian practices given by Willibald, which also included *aruspicia*, *divinationes*, and *incantationes*.<sup>80</sup> The *Vita Bonifatii* was, of course, a source for Hygeburg, and her list is also similar to the list of grievances listed in the *Indiculus superstitionum*.<sup>81</sup> As was seen above, both of these sources reflect not simply paganism but a mixed, syncretic environment dressed up as paganism. Indeed it seems possible that there was already a church in Heidenheim.<sup>82</sup> It is difficult to read Hygeburg's description of Sualaveld as a straight account of Wynnebald's activities, but Hygeburg does show the continuities between the hagiographical traditions of Mainz and Eichstätt, and the potential for conceptualizing local culture therein.

Literary construction or not, Hygeburg's description of paganism sets up a classic forum in which to illustrate Wynnebald's sanctity. Beset by pagan aggression,

Vir Dei nec minis malignantium nec falsis adolantium fribolis mente agitur nec mutatur, sed semper constans et fide robustus in Domino non desiderat docendo plebem ab erratica paganorum pravitae persuadendo educere.<sup>83</sup>

Thus Wynnebald was a saintly figure because of his steadfastness of faith. But he did much more than that: with *suavissimus vox* he challenged the pagans and their ways, bringing them to salvation. As Hygeburg concluded this chapter of Wynnebald's life, he worked hard

ut raro aut numquam divine laudis in ipso cessavit modulatio, aut in psalmis aut in lectionibus aut doctinarum studio, disserendo sive manducando sive bibendo sive aliud agendo, semper sacra in suo pectore permanentes claruerunt oracula. Et sic clara caelorum regna per arctam et celeberrimam caelestis vitae callem omnibus apparuendo patefecit.<sup>84</sup>

Wynnebald was, therefore, saintly because he had shaped cultural life in Southern Germany, rooting out paganism and semi-Christian practices and bringing

<sup>80</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>81</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 65; Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, pp. 610–12.

<sup>82</sup> Parsons, 'Some Churches', p. 40.

<sup>83</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 7: 'the man of God was neither agitated, nor his mind changed, by little malignancy nor false and worthless idolatry, but was rather always constant and robust in his faith in the Lord, not wishing to bring the people away from the teaching and the persuading from the errors of the pagans' rites'.

<sup>84</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 7: 'so that the singing of divine praise, the chanting of psalms, the readings, or the study of doctrine rarely ceased in him. While sowing, eating, drinking, or doing something else, the enduring sacred prophecies always illuminated his heart. And in this manner the bright kingdom of the heavens was lit by a rainbow and the most-celebrated attending of the path of heavenly life by all.'



rigorous Christian standards into all walks of life. The motifs about paganism may have drawn on normative writings from the councils, but in the hagiography they were redeployed to create an imagined culture a new saint could shape.

There is a striking lack of paganism evident in the other Anglo-Saxon *vitae* from Central and Southern Germany. It has even been suggested that Boniface was not remembered as a missionary in Germany,<sup>85</sup> although one should be careful not to exaggerate such a case given the story of Geismar. The history of Boniface's successors appears to have been one of Christianization rather than mission. It might be significant that these later *vitae* all continue and develop the stories in the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>86</sup> Intertextuality meant that, for later hagiographers, paganism had already been eliminated in Willibald's narrative, with the German part of Boniface's career ending with the call for *correctio* rather than mission.<sup>87</sup> The only pagans Sturm was said to have engaged with directly, according to Eigil, were itinerant Slavs. Although they jeered at him initially, the entire scene is actually rather genial.<sup>88</sup> The absence of paganism is most evident in the *Vita Wigberti*, where there is no sense of Fritzlar, Geismar, and Büraburg having a pagan past; Boniface is presented by Lupus as a 'propugnator acerrimus fidei christianae [et] propagator vigilantissimus' ('most keen defender and vigilant propagator of the Christian faith') rather than as a missionary facing pagan Saxon invasions.<sup>89</sup> Subsequently, Fritzlar stood simply as an institutional embodiment of rigorous Christian living.<sup>90</sup> As we shall see further in Chapter 4, hagiographical discourse responded to a shifting sense of the character of Germany.

### *Paganism in Frisia and Saxony*

Early medieval Christian representations of paganism in Frisia and Saxony were no less affected and didactic than their southern counterparts. In hagiographical representations of Saxony in particular there is no evidence of any attempt to

<sup>85</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 57–78, 100–07.

<sup>86</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 57–78.

<sup>87</sup> Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', pp. 79–80.

<sup>88</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 7: 'Qui more gentilium servum Domini subsusannabant et cum eum laedere voluissent divina potentia compressi et prohibiti sunt. Unus autem ex illis qui erat ipsorum interpres, interrogavit eum quo tenderet. Respondit, in superiorem partem eremi se fore iturum.'

<sup>89</sup> Lupus, *VWig*, c. 3.

<sup>90</sup> See below p. 187.

understand the pre-conversion past, and hagiographical topoi are no less prevalent than they were in Germany.<sup>91</sup> There is no mention of the Irminsul — the great sacred tree destroyed by Charlemagne in 772 — in any of the missionary *vitae*, despite its apparent centrality to ‘public’ Saxon religion in court annals.<sup>92</sup> Charlemagne’s own efforts at banning pagan practices bear comparisons with the *Indiculus superstitionem*. In the 789 *Admonitio generalis*, Charlemagne had echoed its language by banning religious rites at trees, stones, and springs (‘arbores vel petrae vel fontes’), as well as *cauculatores* and *incantatores*.<sup>93</sup> These are not denounced as ‘pagan’, merely observances offensive to God. The *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* (c. 792) by contrast shows a less clichéd, but perhaps also no less imaginative, interest in non-Christian practices.<sup>94</sup> It begins by asserting the superiority of churches to temples (‘fana idolorum’) and proceeds to ban people believing in witches (‘striga’) and sacrificing to devils.<sup>95</sup> The deepest concern with pagan *mores*, however, was with those people who refused baptism or those who maintained pagan burial practices, either cremation or burials in mounds.<sup>96</sup> The intention of the capitulary was not to stamp down on pagan religion as such; rather, Charlemagne hoped to reorientate social customs as a way of lessening the difference between the Saxons and Franks, in the process challenging the Saxons’ independent identity.<sup>97</sup>

Presentations of paganism appear qualitatively different for Frisia and Saxony than Germany in the hagiography. Pagans are notably far more aggressive towards

<sup>91</sup> Von Padberg, ‘Zum Sachsenbild’.

<sup>92</sup> Von Padberg, ‘Zum Sachsenbild’, p. 185. The one non-missionary exception is Rudolf of Fulda’s *Translatio s. Alexandri*, c. 3. On the contrast between ‘public’ (pan-Saxon?) paganisms and ‘private’ or ‘family’ paganisms, see Wood, ‘Pagan Religion’, pp. 261–63. The destruction of the Irminsul is recorded in *ARF*, s.a. 772.

<sup>93</sup> *Admonitio generalis*, c. 65.

<sup>94</sup> *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, ed. by Alfred Boretius, MGH Cap., 1 (Hannover, 1883), no. 26. A recent reinterpretation of this text is offered in Yitzhak Hen, ‘Charlemagne’s Jihad’, *Viator*, 37 (2006), 33–51, where the harshness of the punishments are attributed to indirect Islamic influences. The traditional explanation — that the Saxons were just difficult to control — may remain preferable.

<sup>95</sup> *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, c. 1, c. 6, and c. 9. The alleged belief in witches is in fact lifted from the *Lex Salica*; see Palmer, ‘Defining Paganism’, p. 414.

<sup>96</sup> *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, cc. 7–8, c. 22.

<sup>97</sup> Bonnie Effros, ‘De partibus Saxoniae and the Regulation of Mortuary Custom: A Carolingian Campaign of Christianization or the Suppression of Saxon Identity?’, *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire*, 75 (1997), 267–86.

Christians. In the *Vita Bonifatii*, Boniface was unable to work in Frisia because of an upturn in anti-Christian feeling in 716, and of course found the pagan North even more dangerous in 754.<sup>98</sup> This can be contrasted with the way Boniface was allegedly able to chop down the Oak of Jupiter unchallenged in Hesse.<sup>99</sup> Willibrord, meanwhile, was said to have encountered problems in Fositeland (modern Heligoland, off the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein) and narrowly avoided execution when rune stones cast by pagans landed in his favour.<sup>100</sup> The author of the *Vita Willehadi*, imitating the story of Willibrord, wrote that Willehad had also narrowly avoided death after lots were cast in his favour in Frisia.<sup>101</sup> The levels of artistic licence may be questioned in these last two works, especially the latter, but they still attest to a general assumption: Frisia was expected to be far less hospitable an environment for missionaries than Germany.

The Saxons were also renowned for their ferocity.<sup>102</sup> From the Saxon border, in the *Vita Sturmi* (Fulda c. 816) and the *Vita Wigberti* (Ferrières c. 836 for Hersfeld) the Saxons were seen as enemies of the Church for their attacks on Fulda and Fritzlar.<sup>103</sup> Altfred of Münster (839–49) recounted how Lebuin's church at Deventer in Saxony had also suffered repeated attacks.<sup>104</sup> When Lebuin himself challenged the Saxon leaders (*satrapae*) at Marklô, according to the later *Vita antiqua Lebuini*, he suffered rebukes and had stones thrown at him.<sup>105</sup> Ultimately Lebuin could make little headway in the conversion of the Saxons. Likewise Willehad was said to have suffered great difficulties in his Saxon mission. Many of

<sup>98</sup> Willibald, *VB*, cc. 4 and 8. It has been suggested on the evidence of the *Vita Bonifatii* that Boniface was murdered by pirates rather than martyred by pagans but, since Willibald is unambiguous in saying he thought Boniface was martyred, it is difficult to use the *Vita Bonifatii* to prove any alternative state of affairs.

<sup>99</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>100</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, cc. 10–11.

<sup>101</sup> *VW*had, c. 3.

<sup>102</sup> Von Padberg, 'Zum Sachsenbild', p. 186. See for example Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 7 and the references to the Saxons' *natura feroces*.

<sup>103</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 24; Lupus, *VWig*, cc. 13–22.

<sup>104</sup> Altfred, *VLger*, I. 14. Deventer was the sight of a small trading port: see Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs*, I, 146.

<sup>105</sup> *Vita Lebuini antiqui*, c. 6. The story of Marklô is much discussed for what it says about Saxon political structures. It is not, however, mentioned in the earlier account of Lebuin's career by Altfred, and is likely to provide an illustration of Lebuin's sanctity rather than Saxon politics: see Hauck, 'Ein Utrechter Missionar', pp. 744–45.

his companions were even said to have been martyred for destroying shrines at Drenthe.<sup>106</sup> Willehad himself only narrowly escaped because, in a miraculous turn of events, his assailant's axe struck an amulet the saint wore around his neck.<sup>107</sup> It was only with the backing of Charlemagne after 781, and again after 786, that Willehad was said to have made any progress at all, paralleling Eigil's sentiment that Fulda could only be protected properly from the Saxons by Charlemagne's force of arms.<sup>108</sup> In the missionary *vitae* of the eighth and ninth centuries, the Saxons appear to have lived up to their reputation. This representation of the Saxons was no doubt in part influenced by the military situation of the 770s and 780s,<sup>109</sup> but the consistency of the image suggests that it had some currency.

There are some literary parallels between accounts of mission in Frisia and Germany. Alcuin's tells a story of how Willibrord travelled to Fositeland and proved the redundancy of a local pagan holy place ('fana dei'), much as Boniface had attacked the shrine at Geismar.<sup>110</sup> The shrine in Fositeland was a natural spring, which Willibrord blessed and used to baptize some of his followers. He then proceeded to horrify watching pagans by slaughtering some nearby sacred cattle. The basic elements of the story — a natural pagan shrine being defaced to Christian ends to the horror of the watching crowd — all invite comparison with Willibald's story of Boniface felling the Oak of Jupiter.<sup>111</sup> The god Fosite is, unlike Jupiter, not a Roman god, so this element of the story might indicate some genuine knowledge of Frisian paganism, or at least acquaintance with the name of a pagan deity. Alcuin's background makes this plausible: his home town of York was closely connected to Frisia and he is known to have had Frisian students, including Liudger.<sup>112</sup> The story of Willibrord in Fositeland was closely imitated by Altfrid in his *Vita Liudgeri* when he discussed Liudger's alleged pastoral work on the same island.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>106</sup> *VWbad*, c. 4.

<sup>107</sup> *VWbad*, c. 4; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 91.

<sup>108</sup> *VWbad*, c. 5; Eigil, *VS*, c. 25.

<sup>109</sup> Von Padberg, 'Zum Sachsenbild', pp. 185–86.

<sup>110</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 10; von Padberg, *Inszenierung*, p. 250.

<sup>111</sup> Wood, 'Pagan Religion', p. 257; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 87.

<sup>112</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 10.

<sup>113</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 10: '[Liudger] transfretavit in confinio Fresonum atque Denorum ad quandam insulam, quae a nomine Dei sui falsi Fosete, Foseteslant est appellata [ . . . ] Cumque habitatores terrae illius fide Christi imbueret, baptizavit eos cum invocatione sanctae Trinitatis, in fonte qui ibi ebulliebat, in quo sanctus Willibrordus prius homines tres baptizaverat' (underlined

In the Utrecht-Münster tradition this creates an incremental problem: Frisian hagiographical traditions began with a factual basis, these were then put into pre-existing hagiographical models, which were then developed with no interest in distinguishing between fact and model. There was no clear line between the fact and fiction of paganism, just as was the case in Germany.

Altfred, when he deviates from hagiographical models, provides some of the richest evidence for non-Christian practices in early Frisia, but these too are problematical. He told the story, for example, of how Liudger's great-grandmother attempted to kill Liafburg, his mother, when she was a newborn baby.<sup>114</sup> This was apparently permissible as long as the newborn had not yet tasted food. From this story one can infer much about pre-Christian attitudes to infanticide in Frisia. Rob Meens has convincingly argued that the story should be compared to crimes in the *Lex Frisionum* and sins mentioned in a book of penance which might have been owned by Willibrord himself.<sup>115</sup> But these attitudes, as von Padberg has also argued, had been re-employed by Altfred in a theological context to illustrate how the Liudgeriden were predestined to Christian greatness.<sup>116</sup> Altfred probably understood such pre-Christian practices, not through knowledge of early Frisia, but from sources such as the penitentials which sought to stamp out things of which the Church might disapprove. These could be prone to exaggeration and heresy, as illustrated by some of the implausible 'pagan practices' listed in the *Indiculus superstitionem* or Charlemagne's first Saxon capitulary. The Liudgeriden in the *Vita Liudgeri* likely inhabited a demonized and partly imaginary past, in which echoes of a real past are perhaps more coincidental or convenient than deliberate on Altfred's part.

Images of paganism in Frisia and Saxony appear in general to be different from those written in Germany. There might be a less fanciful basis for many stories about the pagan past, but distortion is rarely far away. Composed in places that were still imperfectly Christianized, they are also more likely to reflect real missionary concerns and experiences.<sup>117</sup> Throughout there is a pervading sense of danger,

portions indicate parallels with Alcuin, *VW*, c. 10). Wood notes that, as well as Altfred paralleling Alcuin, Liudger might actually have worked in Fositeland in order to imitate Willibrord's work (Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 111).

<sup>114</sup> Altfred, *VLger*, I. 6–7.

<sup>115</sup> Meens, 'Willibrords Boeteboek?', pp. 168–69.

<sup>116</sup> Von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, p. 99.

<sup>117</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 112.

of a mission field where missionaries were not welcome and martyrdom and murder were commonplace. Within this the missionaries were not described as victorious figures making light of their calling in the face of bemused onlookers, but rather as quasi-heroic people doing their best against the odds to make a Christian foothold in the frozen North. There was, as we will see further below, a clear indebtedness to these figures expressed by later churchmen and monks. While Willibald and Hygeburg had created a new Romanized past for the people of Hesse, Thuringia, and Bavaria, in Frisia and Saxony hagiographers had created a new, partly mythological past in which new Romano-Christian ideals gave new expression to more traditional northern ideals.

### *Confronting Frontiers*

The expansion of Christianity throughout Frisia and Saxony brought the possibility of mission to the Danes to the fore. The Danes were amongst Bede's lists of the Anglo-Saxons' continental kin, but for all intents and purposes they were simply too far away from the old Roman World to be considered pressing targets for mission. Things began to change in the 770s when Widukind fled from the onslaught of Charlemagne's army to seek refuge in the North, prompting King Sigefrid to visit the Frankish court in 782.<sup>118</sup> Paul the Deacon wrote a poem-letter to Charlemagne late in the eighth century in which he mentioned the hope of Sigefrid forsaking the help of 'Thonar' and 'Waten' — the Lombard forms for Thor and Woden — and submitting to the Frankish king.<sup>119</sup> Paul could imagine the Danes being like his own people, the Lombards, even as uncouth pagans. But the diplomacy of the first full entry of the Danes into Frankish history barely hints at the problems that were to follow. In 793 the violent sacking of the monastery of Lindisfarne by Danish raiders heralded the beginnings of the First Viking Age and a new phase of Christian-pagan interaction.<sup>120</sup> For writers conceptualizing paganism in the Anglo-Saxon missions, the sudden prominence of the Viking world created new frames of reference. Some writers used the term 'Nordmanni' to provide the Vikings with a label with prophetic and apocalyptic overtones, echoing Jeremiah's 'out of the North an evil shall break forth' (Jer. 1. 14) and the popular

<sup>118</sup> *ARF*, s.a. 777, s.a. 782.

<sup>119</sup> Paul the Deacon, *Carmina*, MGH Poetae, 1 (Berlin, 1881), no. 14. My thanks to Philip Shaw for bringing this to my attention.

<sup>120</sup> Note that news of 793 did not reverberate around Europe: Bullough, *Alcuin*, p. 411.

seventh-century commentary on Revelations by Pseudo-Methodius.<sup>121</sup> Others took a more sober view and contented to scorn those who collaborated with the worshippers of devils.

Among our hagiographers it was Alcuin, who had been in York as recently as March of 793, who was most affected by the first Viking raid.<sup>122</sup> It was not, however, the nature of Danish paganism which most struck the Northumbrian. He wrote to the Abbot of Lindisfarne, not consoling him as such, but questioning what sinful behaviour might have led to such divine punishment and chastising the monastery for engaging in secular pursuits.<sup>123</sup> In 797 he wrote to Bishop Unnuona of Leicester to warn him against allowing songs about *reges pagani perdit* to be sung at meal times. 'Quid Hinielcus cum Christo?' Alcuin challenged, encouraging the clergy to concentrate on divine worship rather than secular entertainments with pagan themes.<sup>124</sup> (This was, remember, around the same time that he wrote the prose *Vita Willibrordi* to provide suitable entertainment for meal times.)<sup>125</sup> Like Boniface, Alcuin could use paganism to shame his audience into correcting their behaviour. Hinielcus, or Ingeld, is a character from Germanic legend, known through passing references in *Widsith* and *Beowulf* to have been an enemy of the Geat king Hrothgar.<sup>126</sup> Whether or not Alcuin knew those particular poems, the

<sup>121</sup> See Simon Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath or the People of God's Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 42 (1991), 535–54, although he does not mention Pseudo-Methodius. The principal version of Pseudo-Methodius is edited by Ernst Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen* (Halle, 1898), pp. 59–96.

<sup>122</sup> Bullough, *Alcuin*, pp. 410–18; Mary Garrison, 'The Bible and Alcuin's Interpretation of Current Events', *Peritia*, 16 (2002), 68–84 (pp. 72–79).

<sup>123</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 20. See related nos 19, 21, 22, and 24.

<sup>124</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 124. See Donald A. Bullough, 'What Has Ingeld to do with Lindisfarne?', *ASE*, 22 (1993), 93–126, for his important reidentification of the recipient of the letter with Bishop Unnuona of Leicester. For an earlier analysis, see Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, *Beowulf*, and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early Christian Society and its Historian*, ed. by Stephen Baxter (Oxford, 2006), pp. 30–105 (pp. 41–48 and pp. 102–03).

<sup>125</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, pref.

<sup>126</sup> *Widsith*, ed. by Joyce Hill, *Old English Minor Heroic Poems*, Durham and St Andrews Medieval Texts, 4 (Durham and St Andrews, 1983), line 48; *Beowulf*, ed. by Friedrich Klaeber, *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg* (Lexington, 1950), line 2025. J. R. R. Tolkien, *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, Sir Israel Gollancz Lecture, 1936 (Oxford, 1958), p. 16; Bullough, 'What Has Ingeld to Do with Lindisfarne?', pp. 93–94. On less certain ground, see Whitney F. Bolton, *Alcuin and Beowulf: An Eighth Century View* (London, 1978).



letter demonstrates his fear that secular or pagan culture had infiltrated the rituals of Christian living and now threatened to bring God's vengeance. But references to paganism were still employed to rhetorical effect here. Tales of heroic kings are tales of heroic kings, not of pagan practices. Alcuin's spin on these folk tales is an attempt to draw a sharper distinction between acceptable and unacceptable interests for the clergy.

Alcuin's worries found a very different expression in one of his stories about St Willibrord. After time spent evangelizing the Frisians with only limited rewards, the hero 'travelled to the most ferocious people of the Danes' and came face-to-face with a character who might come straight out of a heroic poem: the king Ongendus.<sup>127</sup> The name has attracted comparison with a character in *Widsith* and *Beowulf* called Ongentheow.<sup>128</sup> There are many reasons to be cautious: in the poems Ongentheow is Swedish, not Danish; the names 'Ongentheow' and 'Ongendus' are not strictly philological equivalents; and Ongentheow is supposed to have been a sixth-century figure.<sup>129</sup> This does not preclude Alcuin from appropriating the corrupt Latinized name of an old Scandinavian king for the purposes of a good story.<sup>130</sup> Alcuin himself prefaced the story with the phrase 'ut fertur', 'so we are told', suggesting only a second-hand acquaintance with his material. If we suspend the notion that Alcuin was writing a strictly 'historical' account, it becomes more tempting to see a flight of imagination in which Willibrord faced up to echoes of Germanic tradition. Willibrord thus appeared as a quasi-heroic figure himself, facing up to the dangers of the North. This was the kind of saintly hero Alcuin imagined for a Christian community.<sup>131</sup>

The story of Willibrord and Ongendus reflects further on Alcuin's interest in the conversion of the Saxons. Ongendus is described as a 'homo omni fera crudelior et omni lapide durior', who nevertheless gave Willibrord a warm reception.<sup>132</sup> The language here echoes the kinds of adjectives employed to describe the Saxons. Isidore of Seville had argued in his inimitable style that the Saxons received their

<sup>127</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 9.

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, p. 127; Bolton, *Alcuin and Beowulf*, p. 97.

<sup>129</sup> Levison, *MGH SRM*, 7, pp. 123–24, n. 3.

<sup>130</sup> One could compare here a reference to Ongentheow's enemy Hygelac in Gregory of Tours, *Decim libri historiarum*, III. 2, where the name is both Frankified and Latinized into 'Chlodilaicus'.

<sup>131</sup> Further comparison could be made with Mayr-Harting's interpretation of Guthlac's sanctity as a saintly challenge to Germanic culture (*Coming of Christianity*, pp. 229–39).

<sup>132</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 9: 'a man more savage than any beast and harder than any stone'.

name (from ‘saxosus’, ‘stony’) because they were ‘durum et validissimum’, standing out among the other northern *pyratae*.<sup>133</sup> Alcuin also commented on the hardness of the Saxons in his letters from around 796, although such references trail off from 798 onwards.<sup>134</sup> The change can perhaps be explained as part of the more general change in circumstance and outlook.<sup>135</sup> The story of Ongendus seems to rest at the crossroads between Alcuin’s earlier optimism and the growing frustrations of mission, particularly amongst the Avars. He had once thought of mission to Denmark and Saxony in the same breath, but no longer.<sup>136</sup> Willibrord’s retreat, taking thirty boys with him to train, put the conversion of Denmark into an indefinite future. Stage one was necessarily the conversion of Saxony.

Alcuin had been writing before Viking activity became a serious threat. When it did, from the 830s onwards, little changed in the power of images of paganism to reflect upon contemporary Christian values. A striking example comes from Heiric of Auxerre’s *Translatio sancti Germani*. In 845 a Dane called Ragnar had led a fleet against King Charles the Bald in Paris and, returning to the Danish king Horik I, he boasted that never had he seen lands so rich and a people — the Franks — so cowardly.<sup>137</sup> There is a pedigree to the story, but its neat play with the distinction between the ‘Frozen North’ and civilized South offers a reflective element to the reader, inverting the line of thought among missionary theorists that Christendom was more evidently powerful because of its wealthy lands.<sup>138</sup> The superiority of the people who populated the most fertile lands was no longer self-evident, and the Franks needed to ask themselves why. Not everyone looked inwards to find the problem: Altfrid and Anskar, for example, understood the devastation of the Northmen as a more earthly affliction, but joined Heiric in looking for the

<sup>133</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, IX. 2. 100.

<sup>134</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 110: ‘ecce quanta devotione et benignitate pro dilatatione nominis Christi duritiam infelicis populi Saxonum per verae salutis consilium emollire laborasti’. And again in no. 111, the ‘durissimmi Saxones’, no. 153, the ‘durissima aura’. Compare nos 174, 177–78, 184, and 207. Note that despite his use of ‘antiqui Saxones’ he is not imitating Bede here.

<sup>135</sup> Bullough, *Alcuin*, pp. 468–70; Garrison, ‘The Bible’, pp. 79–84.

<sup>136</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 6.

<sup>137</sup> Heiric of Auxerre, *Ex Miracula s. Germani*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), c. 30. Accounts of the raid are widespread: see *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SRG, 5 (Hannover, 1885), s.a. 845; *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. by Friedrich Kurze, MGH SRG, 7 (Hannover, 1891), s.a. 845; *Annales Xantenses*, ed. by Bernhard von Simson, MGH SRG, 12 (Hannover, 1909), s.a. 845.

<sup>138</sup> The obvious point of comparison is Daniel, *Die Briefe*, no. 23.

intercessions of the saints as consolation.<sup>139</sup> There was no doubt also disappointment behind Alfrid's story that Charlemagne had refused to allow Liudger to preach in Denmark.<sup>140</sup> As with the writings of Alcuin, there was a growing feeling that the pagans beyond Saxony were not going to convert soon.

Confrontation with northern frontiers brought with it a world of fantastical imaginings which complemented the sketches of uncivilized paganism. Monsters had often lurked on the corners of the peripheries of civilization, providing a personification of the desert and the otherworldly.<sup>141</sup> Christendom's expansion into the north thus transposed many themes common in early secular, pagan, and Christian literature and provided them with a new range of meaning. The *Vita altera Bonifatii* presents a strange example, written at the dawn of the Viking Age when *pyratae* from the north had already attacked Britain and been driven away.<sup>142</sup> In a colourful version of Boniface's missionary exploits, it reads as follows:

Et illi quidem antea in suis lucis ac delubris larvas lemuresque coluerant; sed Bonifacius, falcem manu tenens divinam, omnes faunos et sathryos, quos nonnulli paganorum silvestres deos appellant, funditus extirpavit. Similiter autem et driades napeasque et cetera huiusmodi magis portenta quam numina christianis omnibus nauci pendere persuasit [...]. Vir iste spiritu Dei plenus in locis, a quibus supradictas vanitates expulerat, ilico monasteria inclita et basilicas eximias, altaria quoque divinis sacrificiis apta contruxit ibique invocari statuit nomen Dei viri, ubi mortua ydola ab indigenis eatenus colebantur.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Alfrid, *VLger*, I. 27; Anskar, *Miracula s. Willehadi*, ed. by Georg H. Pertz, MGH SS, 2 (Hannover, 1829), pref.

<sup>140</sup> Alfrid, *VLger*, I. 30; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 115.

<sup>141</sup> For a useful survey see Bruno Roy, 'En marge du monde connu: les races de monstres', in *Aspects de la marginalité au Moyen Âge*, ed. by Guy H. Allard (Montréal, 1975), pp. 70–81. On the intrusion of the motif into Christian ascetic literature, see Patricia Cox Miller, 'Jerome's Centaur: A Hyper-Icon of the Desert', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 4 (1996), 209–33, and A. H. Merrills, 'Monks, Monsters, and Barbarians: Re-Defining the African Periphery in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12 (2004), 217–44.

<sup>142</sup> *VaB*, c. 6.

<sup>143</sup> *VaB*, c. 8: 'And beforehand certain of them cultivated their groves and temples of demons and ghosts. But Boniface, carrying by hand a divine scythe, utterly banished all of the fauns and satyrs, which not a few of the pagans called gods of the woods. But he similarly persuaded the dryads and dell-nymphs and other sorcerers of trifling divine portents to abandon all Christians [...]. This man (full of the spirit of God) constructed a famous monastery and excellent churches, as well as altars suitable for divine sacrifice, in the places from which the abovementioned vanities were expelled; and there he decided to invoke the name of the God of Life, where the idol of death had long been cherished by the people.'

The St Martin's monk's use of Greco-Roman images is perhaps derived loosely from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, from which the monk repeatedly quoted elsewhere.<sup>144</sup> Isidore described fauns, demons, dryads, nymphs, and *larvae* in a lengthy discussion of pagan and heretical superstitions that, perhaps significantly, was intended to be contrasted negatively with orthodox Christianity.<sup>145</sup> He also later mentions fauns and satyrs together in a borrowing from Jerome's *Vita Pauli*, which tells the story of St Paul of Thebes, the first hermit, and of St Anthony's encounter with a centaur and a satyr.<sup>146</sup> For Jerome, the monstrous creatures embodied the complex tensions involved in desert asceticism; but for the St Martin's priest a different message seems to have been imagined. It takes little imagination to transform the *silvae* of Latin and Greek legend into the *silvae* that stretched across Germany. But despite the direct quotations from Isidore elsewhere in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, the passage on paganism seems to be a largely independent construction. In the references to *lemures* and *nepeae*, and indeed in the overall imagery of the passage, the monk displayed a knowledge of pagan pastoral poetry that extended beyond Isidore and perhaps to Virgilian poems like *Georgics* from which other contemporary writers were taking influence.<sup>147</sup> The hagiographer had deployed motifs from pagan poetry to illustrate, not just a religious victory, but a cultural triumph against the non-Christian world.

One hypothesis we might entertain about the author's context is that his background was strongly influenced by learning in Anglo-Saxon England itself. The wilful intrusion of classical mythology and literary wordplay into the Northern world conjured up by Bede and Willibald would not be spiritually out of place somewhere like Malmesbury. Aldhelm himself littered his works with classical allusions, drawing on Virgil and others. Michael Lapidge and Andy Orchard have made cases for associating a *Liber monstorum* with the circles of Aldhelm and possibly *Beowulf*, with which it shares certain features and a manuscript.<sup>148</sup> The *Liber*

<sup>144</sup> Palmer, 'Defining Paganism', pp. 414–16.

<sup>145</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, VIII. 11. 10–16, 87, 96–97.

<sup>146</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XI. 3. 21; Miller, 'Jerome's Centaur'.

<sup>147</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*, PL, 111, XV. 2. On the Carolingian interest in Virgil, and in particular the *Eclogues*, see Mary Garrison, 'The Emergence of Carolingian Latin Literature and the Court of Charlemagne', in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 111–40 (pp. 114–15).

<sup>148</sup> *Liber monstorum de diversis generibus*, ed. by Corrado Bologna (Milan, 1977). Michael Lapidge, 'Beowulf, Aldhelm, the *Liber monstorum*, and Wessex', *Studi medievali*, 3rd series, 23 (1982), 151–92; Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters in the Beowulf Manuscript* (Cambridge, 1995).

*monstrorum* is an early Anglo-Saxon entry into the tradition of describing marvels of the East, written by an apprehensive cleric eager to point out that some things that are reported are most certainly not true. He lists a variety of monsters, peoples, and serpents, not with much joy, but in the spirit of medieval encyclopaedia-writing.<sup>149</sup> The author draws critically on the classical poets, with comments like ‘et scribunt Romani cum Graecis per ipsas poeticas incredibilium rerum fabulas’.<sup>150</sup> We also hear of a ‘quandam picturam Graeci operis’ which had informed the author, just as Theodulf had obtained some of his information from decorations.<sup>151</sup> The author of the *Vita altera Bonifatii* would seem less wild in such a context for his interweaving of missionary and literary images. None of which is to say the author *was* from Anglo-Saxon circles, simply that there were a number of traditions to which the writer could have belonged which engaged with the classical past to form ideas on paganism.

Islands and the sea are important factors in this classicizing of the North. The satirical eighth-century *Cosmographie* of Aethicus Ister was one of the first Western texts to set the *cynocephali* — dog-headed men — on islands in the North early in the eighth century.<sup>152</sup> It perhaps took its cue from the popular commentary on Revelations by Pseudo-Methodius, which told a legend that Alexander the Great had driven many races into the North including *cynocephali*.<sup>153</sup> According to Aethicus/pseudo-Jerome, the *cynocephali* were visited by the peoples of *Germania* for trading purposes. There is then an ethnographic description of the *cynocephali*, which pseudo-Jerome dryly remarks is written in a ‘pagan fashion’ (‘profana’). There is indeed a much longer history at play here. Herodotus and Ktesias of Knidos had written about *kunocephaloi*, raising a satirical mirror to their own audiences by discussing the beastly sounds, diets, and sexual practices of monstrous

<sup>149</sup> On the development of encyclopaedia in the Middle Ages, see Jacques Fontaine, ‘Isidore de Séville et la mutation de l’encyclopédisme antique’, in *La pensée encyclopédique au Moyen Âge*, ed. by Maurice de Gandillac and Jacques Fontaine (Neuchâtel, 1966), pp. 43–62, repr. in his *Tradition et actualité chez Isidore de Séville* (Aldershot, 1988), IV.

<sup>150</sup> *Liber monstrorum*, II. 29: ‘along with the Greeks, the Romans write in their poetic fantasies of incredible things’.

<sup>151</sup> *Liber monstrorum*, II. 33.

<sup>152</sup> Aethicus Ister, *Cosmographie*, ed. by Otto Prinz, MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 14 (Munich, 1993), pp. 114–16. On the possibility that this text too sprang from the same intellectual currents as Aldhelm and the *Liber monstrorum*, see Richard Pollard, “Lucan” and “Aethicus Ister”, *Notes & Queries*, 53 (2006), 7–10. More work needs to be done to substantiate this idea fully.

<sup>153</sup> Aethicus Ister, *Cosmographie*, pp. 137–41.

creatures living beyond the borders of the known world.<sup>154</sup> But as frontiers moved outwards, so too did the imagined locations of such wonders, pushed back to be kept within the realms of the barely known. Ktesias was much discussed by contemporaries for being caught out when it transpired there were no *kunokephaloi* in India. There seemed to be an expectation that such things might have a tangible existence. The *cynocephali*'s relocation to the north was another episode in the long tradition of *Zeitkritik* which manipulated uncertainty about things just out of reach in order to provoke thought.

*Cynocephali* became a concrete part of the unknown North. Dog-masks have been discovered in Hedeby, suggesting that there might have been groups of Danes who fostered a group identity around a visual sign their neighbours found other-worldly.<sup>155</sup> Rimbert wrote to Ratramnus of Corbie describing the social customs of *cynocephali*, worried that he might have to engage them in mission.<sup>156</sup> Ratramnus assured him that if the creatures had law, lived together in villages, farmed, and otherwise wore clothes and had a sense of shame, they probably had a soul which required saving through evangelization. They were clearly rational beings. Ratramnus goes on to use Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* to illustrate how many creatures that might seem against nature — pygmies, hippopodes — are in fact simply the degenerate spawn of humans. Isidore himself had argued that *cynocephali* were beasts because of their barking, but Ratramnus countered that if St Christopher was a *cynocephalus* then there was little over which to argue. A central aspect of the discussion is that there was a reality to these literary traditions for Rimbert and Ratramnus. Isidore himself had distinguished between creatures like the *cynocephali* and imaginary creatures like the Gorgons, while the author of the *Liber monstrorum* had shown similar discernment.<sup>157</sup> Credulity is not the issue: the pushing back of real frontiers created the possibility that one could actually encounter that which could be imagined. Paganism in Christian stories was always less about the beliefs of non-Christians, and more about how Christians themselves wished to define their world through its extremes.

<sup>154</sup> James Romm, 'Belief and Other Worlds: Ktesias and the Founding of the "Indian Wonders"', in *Mindscapes: The Geographies of Imagined Worlds*, ed. by George S. Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin (Carbondale, IL, 1989), pp. 121–35.

<sup>155</sup> Inge Hägg, *Die Textilfunden aus dem Hefen von Haithabu*, Ausgrabungen in Haithabu, 20 (Neumünster, 1984), pp. 69–72; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 252.

<sup>156</sup> Only Ratramnus's reply survives: *Epistolae variorum inde a saeculo nono medio usque ad mortem Karoli II imperatoris collectae*, ed. by Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp., 6 (Berlin, 1925), no. 12.

<sup>157</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XI. 3. 28.

## Conclusion

Representations of paganism played a variety of roles in the eighth and ninth centuries. Paganism often seemed more defined in historical narratives than it did in letters and capitularies, although the *vitae* do also engage with issues of backsliding. This gave a clear ‘something’ against which the saints could fight. In such situations figures like Boniface and Willibrord became two things: semi-heroic figures squaring up to the pagan and secular worlds, and the focal points from which true Christian culture spread into different communities. In this sense the *vitae* were serving an important social need in giving origins to local Christian identities; we shall see them combining this with the foundations of communities themselves in Chapter 4. Paganism in the saints’ Lives also formed a distinctive part in early medieval literary and intellectual developments. The author of the *Vita altera Bonifatii* might not have believed fauns and satyrs roamed the forest of *Germania*, but it would not be surprising if he did figuratively: *vitae* extended classical mythologies into the northern parts.

Mission was about more than reimagining past deeds and landscapes: it was about the real shift from pagan or semi-Christian communities to incorporation into a different cultural world. Bonifatian councils which charged people with believing in ‘Jupiter’ demonstrate that ‘imagined paganisms’ had a practical role to play in the way hard-liners strove for perfection. It did not matter if an audience for a sermon did not identify with the non-Christian practices they were being urged to reject; they were encouraged to identify with the preacher’s point of view and join him in the condemnation of superstitions and false gods. The rhetoric of cultural antithesis defined who communities in Germany and Frisia were supposed to be becoming. For modern historians, the implications of such rhetoric should be that the ‘real’ paganisms are more obscured in some sources than often we would like to admit. For missionaries and hagiographers, such rhetoric meant that it was possible to become the author of an idealized clash between two cultures which culminated in the triumph of Christianity.



## ORDER AND THE WILDERNESS

The reputation of the Anglo-Saxons and their colleagues was enshrined in the new foundations that they established along the frontiers of the Frankish world. Missionary work and church organization quickly became part of the same project as missionary bases became part of a new expanded Christian infrastructure. Moreover, the new churches and monasteries became central to the creation of Christian identities as they acted as focal points for new diocesan territories, saints' cults, and the preservation of *memoria*. Conversion to Christianity necessitated a mental remapping of the geography and topography of regions previously outside the 'known world'; here, reflection on foundation legends played a fundamental role in the orientation of the new order. This chapter examines the convergence of two closely related hagiographical themes: the transformation of the wilderness and the emergence of new infrastructure. These motifs provided the imaginative landscape and nodal points in which the work of individuals could be interpreted and remembered as saintly.

A recurring motif is that of the wilderness or 'eremus', from which we derive the words 'eremical' and 'hermit'. The wilderness had two principal functions in the hagiographical imagination.<sup>1</sup> First, it signified detachment from the world and thus a space in which the spiritual life could be pursued and the body and soul purified. Both the Old and New Testaments contained a range of stories set in deserts that fulfilled these functions. It was, however, the story of St Anthony which established the popular saintly ideal of facing one's demons in a harsh

<sup>1</sup> For an important survey of desert motifs, see Antoine Guillaumont, 'La conception du désert chez les moines d'Égypte', *Revue d'histoire des religions*, 188 (1975), 2–21. See also James E. Goehring, 'The Encroaching Desert: Literary Production and Ascetic Space in Early Christian Egypt', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 1 (1993), 281–96.

environment. The second way in which hagiographers used the wilderness was less literally as a metaphor for moral emptiness and degradation in society. This was something we encountered in some form in the chapter on paganism: representations of paganism were less literal reflections of reality and more a way of passing negative comment on the past to amplify the significance of the saint. Through the transformation of wildernesses into something richer, hagiographers also made evident the effect of the saint on the world in which his or her audience lived.

The image of the desert was not entirely stable in hagiographical traditions and in the eighth and ninth centuries evolved in response to changes in Church organization. Restructuring and reform under the Carolingians presented some important challenges to both missionary work and hagiographical legend. There were already existing structures and plans with which churchmen had to work.<sup>2</sup> With the possible exception of Saxony, the Anglo-Saxons and their colleagues had the freedom to create whatever organization they wished restricted.<sup>3</sup> The greatest challenges came from the development of episcopal hierarchies and the changing relationship between churches and monasteries. The Carolingian Church evolved with a stricter sense of authority, with bishops subject to archbishops, priests subject to bishops, and monastic institutions also answerable within this hierarchy, often to the king himself.<sup>4</sup> New churches could benefit from becoming part of this self-legitimizing system, but precisely how they fitted into it and how independent they were to remain was often a discourse in itself. For monasteries, the tensions were even greater: how could an institution self-consciously pitched as a desert in the world maintain its spiritual agenda if it was integrated into the worldly network of bishoprics?<sup>5</sup> The issue was complicated further by ambiguities in the definition of institutional function. The word *monasterium* in Anglo-Saxon England could refer to anything from a monastery in the modern sense to a smaller religious house with pastoral

<sup>2</sup> Staab, 'Die Gründung der Bistümer Erfurt'.

<sup>3</sup> On Saxony, now see Caspar Ehlers, *Die Integration Sachsens in das fränkische Reich* (Göttingen, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> On episcopal organization, see *Concilium Vernense* (755), ed. by Alfred Boretius, MGH Cap., 1 (Hannover, 1883), cc. 1–3; *Capitulare missorum* (802), ed. by Alfred Boretius, MGH Cap., 1 (Hannover, 1883), c. 21. On monasteries, see *Concilium Vernense* (755), c. 10; *Synodus Francofurtensis* (794), ed. by Alfred Boretius, MGH Cap., 1 (Hannover, 1883), c. 17; *Capitulare missorum* (802), c. 15. Mayke de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer', in *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II: c. 700–c. 900, ed. by McKitterick, pp. 622–53; Palmer, 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull'.

<sup>5</sup> Attempts to solve this problem are explored in Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*.

functions.<sup>6</sup> Institutional organization could prove as slippery as descriptions of it were creative, and under the Carolingians this was no longer acceptable. In the process of the reorganization of the Church, hagiographers had to adapt constructions of sanctity to fit within the new frameworks which were emerging.

### *Monasteries and their Deserts*

The transformation of *Germania* under Boniface began, according to Willibald, with the construction of a church in honour of St Michael at Amöneburg. The choice of site was intended to capitalize on his apparent successes as a missionary in the vicinity. The site lies in a prominent position in the flat Ohm valley and was probably a Merovingian hill-fort established as a defensive point against the nearby Saxons.<sup>7</sup> There, Boniface encountered the local leaders Dettic and Deorulf, whom he 'converted from the sacrilegious worship of idols, which they abused under the name of Christianity'.<sup>8</sup> Then, according to Willibald, he gathered together *servi Dei* and constructed a monastic cell (described as both a *cella* and a *monasteriola*) to complement the church.<sup>9</sup> From an organizational point of view, Amöneburg provided for the locality both pastorally through the church and spiritually through the monastic community. The act of building Christian structures in the fort also signified the defeat of paganism, while, as we have seen, carrying echoes of St Martin of Tours and St Benedict of Nursia.<sup>10</sup> But it was also important that the *Vita Bonifatii* recorded that process: the church provided a real physical setting in which the triumph of Christianity could be retold each year so that the story of Boniface maintained its meaning. Through the church, a once-pagan community could celebrate its new Christian past and connect with the saint who had effected the transformation.

Fritzlar, a second early Bonifatian foundation, had a similar role in the transformation of northern Hesse in Willibald's narrative. It was arguably here that Boniface symbolically built the *oratorium* to celebrate the destruction of the Geismar

<sup>6</sup> See Sarah Foot, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: A Review of Terminology', in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. by John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), pp. 212–25.

<sup>7</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments', p. 285.

<sup>8</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6: 'obtinuit, eosque a sacrilega idolorum censura, qua sub quodam christianitatis nomine male abusi sunt'.

<sup>9</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Chapter 3, pp. 126–27.

shrine.<sup>11</sup> Like Amöneburg, Willibald describes it fulfilling the pastoral and spiritual work of God with an *ecclesia* and *monasteriola* positioned together. The image of organization is lent weight by a letter of Boniface's reordering the community on the death of Abbot Wigbert (d. 737/38), which addresses both Tatwine and Wigbert II as priests — in other words, active clergy — with a number of monks subject to them.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that this kind of mixed monastic-pastoral organization, uncommon in the Frankish Church, built upon models found in England.<sup>13</sup> When Lupus of Ferrières came to write his *Vita Wigberti* in 836 after a century of Church reform, some of the symbolic and organizational significance of Fritzlar had faded, leaving him to portray it as a fully formed *coenobium* where monastic norms (*normae*) could be followed under Wigbert as *sacerdos*.<sup>14</sup> Lupus's purpose, however, was to prove the posthumous power of Wigbert as a saint for his audience in Hersfeld, where the Abbot's relics had been transferred some years earlier as part of Lull's reorganization of his diocese.<sup>15</sup> With little information on Wigbert or Fritzlar, Lupus was forced to adapt what he did know: for 774 the *Annales regni Francorum* had recorded that the spirit of Boniface had saved Fritzlar from destruction at the hands of Saxons; in the hands of Lupus, the story was retold with Wigbert as the saintly intercessor. The way the cult of Boniface had developed around specific centres — Fulda, Mainz, Utrecht, Dokkum — meant that the saint was no longer considered an effective patron for all his foundations.<sup>16</sup> Here, changes in church organization and the cult of saints necessitated a new saintly past for Fritzlar.

Fulda, Boniface's principal monastic foundation, provides a different case as it was more explicitly a monastic retreat from the very beginning.<sup>17</sup> Boniface described the foundation itself as a *monasterium* with a church dedicated to St Salvatore — a dedication, as we shall see, that followed Willibrord's church in Utrecht.

<sup>11</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6. See Chapter 3, pp. 125–26.

<sup>12</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 40.

<sup>13</sup> On the Anglo-Saxon minster, see now Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600–900* (Cambridge, 2006), esp. Chapter 7 on the pastoral functions of minsters.

<sup>14</sup> Lupus, *VWig*, c. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Palmer, 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull', p. 267.

<sup>16</sup> Note that even Fulda venerated Boniface as a patron rather than as a founder: Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space', pp. 152–53.

<sup>17</sup> For a fuller account of the foundations of Fulda, see Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space', especially pp. 72–77. See also Karl Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda im Rahmen der bonifatianischen Kirchenorganisation', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 30 (1980), 1–45.

The complex was to be detached from the world, he told Pope Zacharias, in a 'locus silvaticus in heremo vastissimae solitudinis in medio nationum predicationis nostrae'.<sup>18</sup> The image of the desert — the *eremus* — locates Fulda in the kind of spiritual wilderness long associated with the ascetic life. It is of great importance that Boniface conceived of his work in the same terms as hagiography. Fulda was no wilderness: it lay on an old Roman road and was the site of an old Merovingian manor for which Carloman was able to make out a charter.<sup>19</sup> To detach the psychology of a place from the world, however, meant that monks were able to serve God without earthly distractions. Boniface's efforts to obtain papal privileges for the monastery then aimed to preserve the social isolation of the foundation.<sup>20</sup> For Boniface, the necessity of keeping the monastery detached from the world was also personal: it was intended to be the place of his burial and thereafter a *locus sancti*.

The earliest hagiographical reports of Fulda are mixed in their attitude towards the power of the *eremus*. As Ian Wood has observed, Willibald is curiously vague about Fulda because of the politics between Lull and Sturm over control of Boniface's relics.<sup>21</sup> Lull seems to have felt that Fulda and Boniface's relics ought to have served his new diocese rather than remain detached from it. The earliest proper hagiographical description of Fulda is therefore by Liudger, writing close to 800. It was described more in terms of its isolation than any symbolic triumph:

Sturmi vero venerabilis abbas, unus ex numero illo electorum Dei, quantum profecerit in eremo sua post martyrium sancti magistri, Bocanna silva in testimonio est, quae prius omnimodis inculta erat ac deserta, nunc autem ab oriente usque ad occidentem, a septentrione usque ad meridiem ecclesiis Dei et electis palmitibus monachorum repleta est.<sup>22</sup>

This is a distillation of a common theme in hagiography: the transformation of a desert into a rich, cultivated land of churches and monasteries. The monastery of Fulda itself is an essential part of the work here, providing a focal point for the work. Liudger concludes his chapter by celebrating the presence of four hundred

<sup>18</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 86: 'wooded place in a vast desert wilderness in the middle of the nation to whom we are preaching'.

<sup>19</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments', p. 290; Heinrich Hahn, 'Ausgrabungen am Fuldaer Domplatz im Jahre 1953', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 641–86; Eigil, *VS*, c. 12.

<sup>20</sup> For context, see Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*.

<sup>21</sup> Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 306.

<sup>22</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 5: 'Sturm the venerable abbot was one of the many elect of God who, after the martyrdom of St Boniface, did so much in his desert of the Bochonian forest. It was once uncultivated and deserted, but it is now replete with the churches of God and the elect vines of monks from east to west and from north to south.'

monks in the monastery, providing a physical illustration of the change that had been effected. The monastery represents something which endures in the world beyond the earthly lifespan of the saints. Given that Liudger's chapter was about the extension of Boniface's work, it is important not to underestimate the significance of ending with a physical testament to that endeavour.

Twenty or so years later, Abbot Eigil of Fulda elaborated on the spiritual importance of the *eremus* in his account of Fulda's foundation.<sup>23</sup> Sturm, who first established the site for Boniface, was portrayed as a figure desirous of a harder life in the wilderness.<sup>24</sup> The first potential site he found was at Hersfeld, where Lull later established his own foundation.<sup>25</sup> There is evidence, however, of pre-monastic settlement on the site,<sup>26</sup> revealing Eigil's image of an untamed wilderness to be a literary reimaging of the area. Hersfeld, Eigil claimed, was too close to the Saxons anyway so somewhere more remote was sought.<sup>27</sup> The narrative development in which Hersfeld was found but then deemed unsuitable emphasizes the suitability of Fulda's location for the audience, something subsequently amplified by Sturm's long efforts to find just the right place. Fulda's 'wilderness' was, however, no less imaginary than at Hersfeld, as we have seen. Eigil's foundation story for Fulda therefore imagined a wilderness to create spiritual seclusion for the monastery.<sup>28</sup>

The transformation of the wilderness contributed to Sturm's status as a saintly founding figure. Immediately Sturm and his brethren cleared a site in the forest and quickly constructed the new monastery.<sup>29</sup> Then, as we will see in the next chapter, Sturm was at the forefront of efforts to establish monastic discipline at Fulda.<sup>30</sup> Alongside that story stood a clear change of context: Fulda was no longer in the

<sup>23</sup> Brunert, 'Fulda als Kloster *in eremo*'. On the dating of the text, see Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space', pp. 68–72.

<sup>24</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 4: 'Pergite, ait episcopus, in hanc solitudinem quae Bochochia nuncupatur, aptumque servis Dei inhabitandum exquirite locum; potens est enim Deus parare servis suis locum in deserto.' Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space', p. 73.

<sup>25</sup> On Lull's Hersfeld, see Palmer, "'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull", pp. 266–67.

<sup>26</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments', p. 288.

<sup>27</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 5: 'Locum quidem quem repertum habetis, habitare vos propter viciniam barbaricae gentis pertimesco; sunt enim, ut nostri, illic in proximo feroces Saxones. Quapropter vobis remotiorem et inferiorem in solitudine requirite habitationem, quam sine periculo vestri colere quaetis.'

<sup>28</sup> Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space', p. 77.

<sup>29</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 14. See pp. 165–204.

wilderness. Nobles now competed to visit the monastery and bestow gifts upon it.<sup>31</sup> It was now also connected to the rest of the Carolingian kingdom through its associations with the royal court, Boniface's Frisian bases, and Jumièges, Sturm's place of exile.<sup>32</sup> One association that Eigil did emphasize was with the former Hedenen hill-fort of Hammelburg, which Pippin had granted to Fulda in 777;<sup>33</sup> this extended Fulda's influence south towards Würzburg and, by recording it in the *Vita Sturmi* as well as a charter, Eigil helped to bind Fulda and Hammelburg together through the memory of Sturm. It was, therefore, through Sturm that Fulda ceased to be isolated and instead became bound to the wider world.<sup>34</sup> Carolingian *correctio* challenged figures like Eigil to understand their spiritual isolation in the context of episcopal and secular authority;<sup>35</sup> through a reimagination of a saintly past, purity and order could be articulated.

Lacking from Eigil's narrative — and indeed most others — is a place for Fulda's female counterpart at Tauberbischofsheim. Boniface's centre for female monasticism was built near Würzburg around the same time as Fulda. But whereas Fulda was defined by its 'wilderness', Tauberbischofsheim's proximity to Würzburg suggests that Boniface wanted his principal female monastic house closer to the world. Information on the monastery is nevertheless scarce until Rudolf's *Vita Leobae* in 836 nearly a century after its foundation. There are no 'wildernesses' in Rudolf's narrative to be transformed; rather, Leoba is imported into a ready-made monastic setting.<sup>36</sup> In many respects this is a reflection of the growth of monitoring and regulating the female religious life in the ninth century.<sup>37</sup> The contrast with Sturm and Fulda is significant: the transformation of the *eremus* was closely bound to an active quest to find solitude through travel, and that was not an acceptable model

<sup>31</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 16: 'utpote quoniam multi nobiles certatim et concite properantes, se suaque omnia ibi Domino tradiderunt'. On Fulda's networks of patronage, see Innes, *State and Society*, esp. pp. 21–22 and pp. 60–68.

<sup>32</sup> Eigil, *VS*, cc. 15, 17, 19.

<sup>33</sup> MGH DD Mer., 1, no. 116; Eigil, *VS*, c. 22. Only a later forgery exists of this charter, but it is the use of it that is important. On the ritual which accompanied the charter, see Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 112, 138.

<sup>34</sup> It is worth remembering here developing attitudes towards a Universal Church: Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 72–75 and 91–96; Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio'.

<sup>35</sup> See for example *Capitulare missorum* (802), cc. 12–15, which among other things orders abbots to adhere to monastic rules, cooperate with counts, and accept the overlordship of bishops.

<sup>36</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 11.

<sup>37</sup> *Capitulare missorum* (802), c. 18. See also *Concilium Vernense*, cc. 5–6.



for female monasticism in the mid-ninth century. Rudolf's function of Tauber-bischofsheim was to provide abbesses for other *monasteria feminarum* and inspire local communities through pious example. Women were to play little role in the transformation of the wilderness, but they were to be key to the subsequent work.

Into Bavaria, Hygeburg extended the image of new Anglo-Saxon foundations transforming the wilderness.<sup>38</sup> Willibald's work created a rich and cultivated land through the establishment of Eichstätt as the monastic centre for his work.<sup>39</sup> Again, it seems, monasteries were intended to support pastoral work. Beforehand the land, owned by Suidger, had been a complete wasteland ('totum vastatum') except for a small church which Willibald later rebuilt.<sup>40</sup> The success of Willibald's work stretched outwards from Eichstätt to transform the whole of Bavaria, Hygeburg claimed, adorning it with churches, priests, and riches ('dona') worthy of the Lord. She also portrayed Willibald going energetically from place to place 'like a busy bee', collecting the best observances he found from far and wide. The *apis prudentissima* is a simile often associated with Aldhelm because of his use of the device in *De virginitate* to illustrate monastic discipline.<sup>41</sup> Hygeburg, despite her Aldhelmian stylings, has a slightly different take on the motif. In part, she imitates Willibald's description of Boniface's vigorous pastoral activities — which also employs the *apis prudentissima* simile — to create parallels between the two saints.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps more significantly, however, it seems to imitate Evagrius's account of St Anthony seeking out hermits to learn more about the eremitical life before heading into the desert.<sup>43</sup> There was here a hagiographical pedigree for the *apis prudentissima* heading into the wilderness and helping to fertilize it through religious observance.

Hygeburg expanded her theme in her account of Wynnebald tackling the Bavarian 'wilderness' around Heidenheim. Wynnebald's work here in the 730s is

<sup>38</sup> On the importance of the form of monastic life, see Engels, 'Die Vita Willibalds'.

<sup>39</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5. On Suidger, see above, pp. 94–100 and 105.

<sup>41</sup> For Aldhelm's bees, see his *De virginitate*, V–VI; Augustine Casiday, 'St Aldhelm's Bees (*De virginitate prosa* cc. IV–VI): Some Observations on a Literary Tradition', *ASE*, 33 (2004), 1–22.

<sup>42</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 5. There are no close parallels in the precise wording of the *VB* and *VWill* passages about *apes prudentissimae*, but the motif of the careful bee taking sweet things and rejecting poison is the same.

<sup>43</sup> Evagrius, *Vita Antonii latine*, *PL*, 73, c. 3; Casiday, 'St Aldhelm's Bees', p. 8. See also Asser, *Vita Alfredi*, ed. by William Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), c. 76, which is another text modern historians associate with Aldhelmian imagery but which seems to owe more to Evagrius in intention.

said to have had generous material support from Duke Odilo.<sup>44</sup> At this stage in the story there is no sense of a desert, just Odilo's people having lapsed into bad practices, particularly with regard to the eternal Bonifatian concern of marriage. After some time in Mainz, again as a reformer, Wynnebald travelled to join his brother at Eichstätt and the brothers turned their attentions towards the foundation of Heidenheim.<sup>45</sup> This time there was a spiritual desert: the region was wild and all forest ('agrestis et silva totis'), creating another imagined wilderness contradicted by the apparent presence of more churches.<sup>46</sup> This time, however, the saint actively engaged in clearing the wilderness of trees and thornbushes. The hagiographical traditions are clear again with Hygeburg echoing saints Martin, Benedict, and Boniface.<sup>47</sup> Wynnebald had no easy victory, however, and Hygeburg portrays him both as a fighter and as a shepherd protecting sheep from the attacks of wolves. In the scenes leading up to his death more is made of this struggle, again locating it 'in agrestis silva'.<sup>48</sup> The successful transformation of the landscape was not, however, fundamental to his sanctity; rather, it was the discovery of his incorrupt body fifteen years after his death.<sup>49</sup> But this itself became part of the physical environment because Willibald had constructed a church in which his brother's body could rest after its translation in 777 to Eichstätt.<sup>50</sup> The creation of saints and the transformation of the landscape went hand-in-hand.<sup>51</sup>

### *Churches and Bishoprics in Germany*

The mixed pastoral and monastic functions of places like Amöneburg and Fritzlar were not to last. After Boniface's third visit to Rome in 738, he returned with new plans to create diocesan systems in central and southern Germany,<sup>52</sup> schemes which

<sup>44</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, cc. 6–7.

<sup>46</sup> Parsons, 'Some Churches', p. 40; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 65.

<sup>47</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Vita s. Martini*, c. 13; Gregory, *Dialogi*, II. 8; Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 8: 'in the wild wood'.

<sup>49</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 13. For a discussion of other incorrupt saints' bodies, see Antonia Gransden, 'The Legends and Traditions Concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *EHR*, 394 (1985), 1–24 (pp. 5–8).

<sup>50</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 11. Engels, 'Die Vita Willibaldi', p. 172.

<sup>51</sup> See further on this theme Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, pp. 23–49.

<sup>52</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 7; Boniface, *Die Briefe*, nos 50–53.

have been the subject of much inconclusive debate.<sup>53</sup> Most scholars have tried to establish the chronology of the foundation of sees in Würzburg, Buraburg, and Erfurt (either in 741 or 742), whether the subsequent *Concilium Germanicum* was really held in 743 rather than 742, and whether Willibald was Bishop of Erfurt before he was Bishop of Eichstätt. The problem, as Tim Reuter wisely pointed out, is that all we can say for certain is that the dating clause of the *Concilium Germanicum* states that it was held in 742.<sup>54</sup> The numerous efforts to establish chronology on the basis of hagiographical narratives are doomed to failure because the hagiographies were not written with a positivistic historical agenda.<sup>55</sup> Of more interest are the ways in which these episcopal foundations were treated as their purpose was written up in the century afterwards. Churches and *parochia* needed a different collection of rhetorical strategies to monasteries and their *eremi*.

An important dynamic of the hagiographical discourse begun by Willibald was that it downplayed any pre-Bonifatian missionary work and church building. The world Boniface encountered was one of tyrannical dukes, backsliders, and heretics, and little order. But the narrative masks some of the groundwork laid for Boniface's successes. Missionaries including Kunibert of Cologne and Kilian of Würzburg had converted many communities between the Rhineland and Thuringia in the seventh century.<sup>56</sup> The *oppidum* at Büraburg was the site of a monastery in the seventh century before Boniface designated it an episcopal base.<sup>57</sup> Bavaria even had a number of bishops before Boniface appointed any (and indeed three of the four bishops Boniface supposedly 'appointed' were in office before he arrived in the region).<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1463–71; Bigelmair, 'Die Gründung des mittel-deutschen Bistümer'; Wolfgang H. Fritze, 'Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen in die Mainzer Diözese', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 4 (1954), 37–63; Löwe, 'Bonifatius', pp. 110–20; Jäschke, 'Die Gründungszeit der mitteldeutschen Bistümer'; Pfeiffer, 'Erfurt oder Eichstätt?'; Helmut Michels, 'Das Gründungsjahr des Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg', *AmKg*, 39 (1987), 11–42; Parsons, 'Some Churches', esp. pp. 36–40; Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, pp. 123–46.

<sup>54</sup> Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', pp. 92–93, n. 73; Reuter, "Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik", pp. 48–49.

<sup>55</sup> This was in a sense a central concern of Delehaye, *Legends of the Saints*. For further reflections on the problem, see Palmer, 'Hagiography and Time'.

<sup>56</sup> Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation', pp. 457–58; Wallace-Hadrill, 'Background to St. Boniface's Mission'.

<sup>57</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments', p. 288; Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen'.

<sup>58</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 7. The claims of Willibald are complicated by letters included in the Bonifatian letter collections: Gregory III, *Die Briefe*, nos 44–45.

The point, now long recognized, is that the novelty of Boniface's work in Germany was exaggerated right from the beginning.

A key problem was that the rural landscape which had lent itself so well to little *ecclesiae* and *monasteriolae* was less suited to episcopal organization. Military forts were not cities. In central Germany, Boniface planned to establish bishops at Würzburg, Büraburg, and Erfurt following an arc of Frankish defensive fortifications.<sup>59</sup> But he described Erfurt to Zacharias as a former 'urbs paganorum rusticorum', prompting worries from the Pope.<sup>60</sup> Zacharias replied:

Sed tua sancta fraternitas pertractet mature et subtili consideratione discernat, si expedit aut si loca vel populorum turbae talia esse probantur, ut episcopos habere mereantur. Meminis enim, carissime, quid in sacris canonibus precipimur observare, ut minime in villulas vel in modicas civitates episcopos ordinemus, ne vilescat nomen episcopi.<sup>61</sup>

Subsequently, he confirmed only the appointments of Burchard at Würzburg and Witta at Büraburg.<sup>62</sup> It is not clear, however, that the *oppidum* at Büraburg represented even a *modica civitas* either, and upon Witta's death in 747, plans for the see lapsed along with those for Erfurt. Boniface's plans had proved short-lived.

Any uncertainty about the status of Boniface's new bishoprics was skilfully sidestepped by Willibald. In a much discussed passage he wrote,

Et duos bonae industriae viros ad ordinem episcopatus promovit, Willibaldum et Burchardum, eisque in intimis orientalium Franchorum partibus et Baguariorum terminis aecclesias sibi commissas inperitendo distribuit. Et Willibaldo suae gubernationis parochiam commendavit in loco cuius vocabulum est Haegsted, Burchardo vero in loco qui appellatur Wirzaburch dignitatis officium delegavit et aecclesias in confinibus Franchorum et Saxonum atque Sclavorum suo officio deputavit.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 50. On the frontier, see Norbert Wand, 'Die fränkische Expansion in Nordhessen', in *Die Franken, Wegbereiter Europas*, vol. 1: *Vor 500 Jahren: König Chlodweg und seine Erben*, ed. by Alfred Wieczorek (Mainz, 1996), pp. 323–30; Matthias Hardt, 'Hesse, Elbe, Saale and the Frontiers of the Carolingian Empire', in *The Transformation of Frontiers from Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*, ed. by Walter Pohl, Ian Wood, and Helmut Reimitz, TRW, 10 (Leiden, 2001), pp. 219–32 (pp. 222–24).

<sup>60</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 50: 'city of rustic pagans'.

<sup>61</sup> Pope Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 51: 'But let your saintly fraternity think further and discern subtle considerations, if it is profitable, whether the place or crowd of people are of such a kind to be approved in order to merit having bishops. For remember, most beloved, what we are recommended to observe in sacred canons, that we should not ordain bishops in villages or modest cities, lest we denigrate the name of bishop.'

<sup>62</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, nos 52–53.

<sup>63</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8: '[Boniface] promoted two good and industrious men to the order of bishop, Willibald and Burchard, and divided between them a share of the churches committed to

It is notable within this narrative that neither Büraburg nor Erfurt is mentioned. Instead we find the certainty of the 760s when it was clear that Würzburg and Eichstätt were going to be lasting monuments to the Anglo-Saxons' work. Moreover, Wolfgang Fritze detected here echoes of Lull's own ambitions in the fanciful claims to the Saxon and Slavic mission fields.<sup>64</sup> The new sees were not just organizational constructs in the *Vita*, they were also symbolic representations of the Anglo-Saxons' missionary ideals. By omitting Büraburg and Erfurt, Willibald could concentrate on the past successes that were to form the cornerstones of future works.

The claims made for Würzburg helped to define the extent of the Anglo-Saxons' work. When Willibald discussed Amöneburg, for example, he mentioned the importance of evangelizing the *Hessi* as far as the *finis Saxonum*.<sup>65</sup> Although it was often true that the 'frontier' was viewed as something through which missionaries sought to break,<sup>66</sup> they were also a reality with which the missionaries had to work. In part that was why Boniface never to our knowledge actually worked in Saxony: Frankish authority simply did not extend far enough into Saxon territory during Boniface's lifetime.<sup>67</sup> According to the image of Burchard and Willibald in the *Vita*, Boniface had bestowed a coherence on the fragmented Christian landscape of central Germany using the military organization already in place. The importance ascribed to Würzburg therefore acted as a device to bring unity to the foundations and places in which Boniface was supposed to have worked.

Willibald's smooth version of the Bonifatian foundation narrative found an audience in early annalistic traditions at Lorsch and Fulda. The ninth-century *Annales Fuldenses* dated the foundation of Eichstätt and Würzburg to 746, following a statement in the earlier *Annales Laurissenses minores* that they were founded in the fifth year after Pippin came to power (i.e. 745) with Burchard and Willibald appointed to the sees the following year.<sup>68</sup> These statements are technically contradicted by

him in the eastern parts of the Franks and the borders of the Bavarians. And he commended to Willibald's governance the place whose name is Eichstätt, and he delegated to Burchard the dignified office in the place called Würzburg, putting to his office the churches within the borders of the Franks and Saxons and Slavs.'

<sup>64</sup> Fritze, 'Bonifatius', p. 49.

<sup>65</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Ian Wood, 'Missionaries and the Christian Frontier', in *Transformation of Frontiers*, ed. by Pohl, Wood, and Reimitz, pp. 209–18 (p. 209).

<sup>67</sup> This does not, of course, mean there were no plans made for Saxony: see now Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, pp. 526–28.

<sup>68</sup> *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. by Friedrich Kurze, s.a. 746; *Annales Laurissenses minores*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, I (Hannover, 1826), p. 115. The translation from the 'regnal years' of

the letter from Zacharias confirming Burchard's appointment to Würzburg in 743.<sup>69</sup> The initial annalist had perhaps skewed the date by attempting to follow Willibald's narrative chronologically. If one read Willibald's story as a linear progression, it would force the reader to fit the appointment of Burchard and Willibald between the reform councils of 742–43 and the retirement of Carloman in 746. Consequently, a hagiographical statement designed to smooth over organizational uncertainty and assert claims over future mission fields had become to one annalist a concrete statement about the establishment of diocesan organization. It is an instructive lesson for anyone trying to use hagiography to establish chronology. Hagiographical discourse could be appropriated for historiography as a narrative, but this did not mean that original meaning would be preserved in the process.

The shift between mission and church organization is indicative of a shift in mentality in the region overseen by Lull. As we saw in the previous chapter, it was by no means certain that Boniface's circle were welcome in Mainz, and Lull had to fight hard to assert his moral and episcopal authority.<sup>70</sup> Most sources for Lull's activities show that consolidation rather than missionary expansion was his priority. His policing of wandering priests and general concern for the standards set down at the reform councils of Boniface and Chrodegang led to one Fulda monk recalling that he had 'ruled vigorously'.<sup>71</sup> He bought lands in Mainz and Bingen to enable him to access local power structures, while also benefiting from lay patronage of Hersfeld — where he was also abbot — through which he gained lands and rights from Worms to Fritzlar and from Fritzlar to Erfurt.<sup>72</sup> Gaining control of tithes and churches between Hersfeld and Erfurt in the 770s may be indicative of Lull's efforts to create something new in the wake of the abandoned plans for a see in the region.<sup>73</sup> Lull may even have envisaged establishing a jumping off point for missionary work in Saxony.<sup>74</sup> But as bishop of an established (if consolidating) diocese, Lull was part of the Carolingian system rather than a headline grabber. It

*Annales Laurissenses minores* to the AD-dating of the *Annales Fuldenses* assumes Pippin's year 1 only corresponds to the period between Charles Martel's death on 22 October 741 and the change of the calendar year on Christmas Day.

<sup>69</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 53.

<sup>70</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Life" of Bishop Lull'.

<sup>71</sup> Meginhart, *Sermo de sancto Ferruccio*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), p. 150. For an example of Lull's concerns, see Lull, *Die Briefe*, no. 110.

<sup>72</sup> *UBF*, nos 40–41.

<sup>73</sup> MGH DD Mer., 1, nos 103, 104, 105.

<sup>74</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Life" of Bishop Lull', pp. 268–75.

is notable that while he pushed forward the agendas of his missionary predecessors, from his own generation the saintly heroes were the new founding fathers like Liudger and Willehad on the edges of the new frontiers.

Saints' cults still had an active role to play in the consolidation of Christian communities and identities. In Würzburg, Boniface and Burchard were credited with the translation to a new shrine of the relics of St Kilian, the Irish missionary who had worked in the region a generation earlier.<sup>75</sup> Kilian was later recorded in a calendar from the court of Charlemagne as one of only two recent saints — the other being Boniface — which is an indication that the cult quickly became highly symbolic of the new order.<sup>76</sup> Meanwhile, the relics of St Wigbert were translated from Fritzlar to Hersfeld by Lull, perhaps as a northern counterpart to the new cult of Kilian.<sup>77</sup> He also ordered the translation of the relics of St Goar to a new church on the Rhine.<sup>78</sup> The prize relics were of course Boniface's own, over which something of a tussle seems to have developed. Despite Willibald's assurance that Lull had allowed Boniface's relics to be moved from Mainz to Fulda, Eigil later claimed that Lull had attempted to block the move.<sup>79</sup> The root of this disagreement, and what Lull's actions might actually have been, are lost to us. Both texts, however, speak of the same important ideal: that bishops wanted to have a say in the cult of saints because it formed a powerful part of their diocesan infrastructure. The narration of foundations worked best if supported by relics to provide focal points for the intersection of topography and history.

The period of organization and consolidation was important for establishing the reputation of pioneering saints. But at the same time those responsible for the organization often got sidelined in the story of the transformation. Lull and Burchard were not afforded hagiographies until centuries had passed and they had become, like Goar and Kilian, part of a more remote saintly past. A saint who could supply foundation legends was more powerful and more symbolic locally than figures who had developed the contexts in which origin legends had any lasting meaning.

<sup>75</sup> *Passio minor Kiliani*, c. 15; *VBurch*, cc. 5–6; Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg*, p. 22.

<sup>76</sup> Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*, pp. 78–79. The change in status would complement the use of the cult to celebrate the decline of the Hedenen, on which see above, pp. 101–02.

<sup>77</sup> Lupus, *VWig*, cc. 24–25.

<sup>78</sup> Wandalbert, *Miracula s. Goaris*, c. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8; Eigil, *VS*, c. 16.



*Churches in Frisia*

So far we have seen that there was an intimate connection between constructions of sanctity, the building of churches, and the transformation of imagined wildernesses. In Frisia the process worked differently because there were a number of churches in Utrecht itself and no relics for its two key apostles, Willibrord (buried in Echternach) and Boniface (buried in Fulda). The fort of Utrecht was symbolic of power in the region.<sup>80</sup> It had, however, only achieved its position as a place of unrivalled authority eventually, having originally been only one of several Roman forts on the Rhine, for a time dwarfed by the commercial importance of nearby Dorestad (now Wijk-bij-Duurstede).<sup>81</sup> Utrecht was both the centre of Radbod's authority and in an area where the Liudgeriden held much land.<sup>82</sup> Frisia remained a wilderness even to some inhabitants. The author of the *Vita altera Bonifatii* in Utrecht emphasized that the region's watery environs kept it remote from other nations, and he also compared the Frisians to fish.<sup>83</sup> Only the work of Willibrord and Boniface in Utrecht began to transform Frisia.

The relationship between Utrecht's churches, saints, and mission was a deep concern for Boniface himself. In c. 753 he wrote a letter to Pope Stephen II to put forward the case for taking Utrecht away from the control of the bishops of Cologne who, he argued, had no interest in mission.<sup>84</sup> The bishops had allegedly been entrusted with the Frisian mission field after the Merovingian king Dagobert I (623–38) had given them a church in Utrecht. Boniface's justifications for re-evaluating the situation rested heavily on his perception of Willibrord's work in the city: in fifty years, Boniface wrote, Willibrord had preached, destroyed pagan shrines, built an *ecclesia* to St Salvatore as his episcopal see, and rebuilt the *ecclesiola* once entrusted to Cologne, rededicating it in honour of St Martin. The bishops of Cologne, on the other hand, had done nothing. Willibrord's saintly reputation was apparently not sufficient to support the Anglo-Saxon claims, so it was his churches that provided the proof of his great works. Boniface also needed to bend the truth

<sup>80</sup> Mostert, 754, p. 28.

<sup>81</sup> Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs*, I, 139–63; H. L. de Groot, 'Utrecht and Dorestad: Fifteen Miles Apart, a World of Difference', in *Utrecht, Britain and the Continent: Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, ed. by Elisabeth de Bièvre, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 18 (London, 1996), pp. 12–21.

<sup>82</sup> Altfred, *VLger*, I, 4; *Vita Vulframii*, c. 10. On Liudger and his family, see above, pp. 108–11.

<sup>83</sup> *VaB*, c. 9; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 105.

<sup>84</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 109. On the letter, see Mostert, 'Bonifatius als geschiedvervalser'.

in his account.<sup>85</sup> Willibrord's 'fifty years' in Utrecht, for example, deliberately ignores his time in Echternach, while the 'failings' of the Cologne bishops is more a comment on the then-Bishop Hildegard than, say, the active missionary Kunibert (d. c. 663). To Boniface, the combination of past missionary work and church building gave his own plans greater legitimacy.

It has proved impossible in recent scholarship to establish what the nature of Willibrord's churches was.<sup>86</sup> The *ecclesiola* of St Martin's became a monastic church so it has been argued that Utrecht was arranged like Canterbury with neighbouring monastic and episcopal bases.<sup>87</sup> But the evidence does not necessarily allow such an interpretation. Charles Martel made out a charter to Willibrord for a *monasterium* within the walls of the city but alas did not specify any churches.<sup>88</sup> Two charters from Pippin III to Boniface about St Martin's — both likely tenth-century forgeries — seem to envisage St Martin's as the city's principal church.<sup>89</sup> References to Utrecht's churches in the *vita*e by Liudger and Altfrid, on the other hand, confirm Boniface's view that St Salvatore's was Willibrord's episcopal centre.<sup>90</sup> None of this explains why Willibrord would want to rebuild St Martin's rather than just build a new *monasterium* alongside St Salvatore's.<sup>91</sup> The current consensus contends that while St Salvatore's was Willibrord's own church, the longstanding politics surrounding St Martin's — and particularly its Frankish dedication — made it symbolic of Frankish rule in the area.<sup>92</sup> Anything more is difficult to ascertain.

<sup>85</sup> Mostert, 'Bonifatius als geschiedvervalser', pp. 218–20.

<sup>86</sup> For a summary of the evidence and the different interpretations of it, see David Parsons, 'Willibrord's "Frisian" Mission and the Early Churches in Utrecht', in *Golden Age of Northumbria*, ed. by Hawkes and Mills, pp. 136–49. The debate has been prompted by the work of Charlotte Broer and Martin de Bruijn, who, controversially, take seriously the fourteenth-century statements of Jan Beke on the organization of the churches in Utrecht: see most recently Broer and de Bruijn, *Bonifatius en de Kerk van Nederland* (Utrecht, 2005), pp. 17–18 and pp. 23–29.

<sup>87</sup> Rudolf Schieffer, *Die Entstehung von Domkapiteln*, Bonner Historische Forschungen, 43 (Bonn, 1976), p. 178. For criticisms of Schieffer, see P. H. D. Leupen, 'Sint Salvator en Sint Maarten, Willibrord en Bonifatius', in *Willibrord*, ed. by Bange and Weiler, pp. 318–19, and Eelico van Welie, 'St Salvator's, St Martin's and Pippin the Younger', in *Utrecht, Britain and the Continent*, ed. by de Bièvre, pp. 58–68 (pp. 59–60).

<sup>88</sup> *Diplomata maiorum domus e stirpe Arnulforum*, no. 11.

<sup>89</sup> MGH, DD Mer., 1, nos 4–5.

<sup>90</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 15; Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 16.

<sup>91</sup> Van Welie, 'St Salvator's', p. 60.

<sup>92</sup> Leupen, 'Sint Salvator en Sint Maarten', pp. 322–24; van Welie, 'St Salvator's', p. 64.

One piece of evidence that has been overlooked is the view from St Martin's itself through the *Vita altera Bonifatii*.<sup>93</sup> The church is described as a *sedes*, well-adorned with gold and gems and with an active, if demanding, congregation.<sup>94</sup> It would mean that the church (or monastery) was not simply politically symbolic, but that it also played an active religious role in Utrecht independent of St Salvatore's. The *vita* is unlikely to have been royal propaganda per se because it does not mention Pippin, or indeed any other secular figure. Moreover, it makes nothing of the Bonifatian charters relating to St Martin's, which suggests either no knowledge of the documents or an unwillingness to affirm Pippin's patronage.<sup>95</sup> It does mention both an *ecclesia* and a *monasterium* in a chapter on Boniface's arrival in Utrecht as Boniface sought the body of Willibrord.<sup>96</sup> It remains difficult again, however, to decide whether this is a reference to St Salvatore's and St Martin's, or — given that St Martin's is described as a *sedes* — whether this is a reflection of the way St Martin's had expanded by the ninth century.

The three hagiographers of the Utrecht-Münster tradition — the St Martin's priest, Liudger, and Altfrid — appear to present different attitudes towards the churches of Utrecht as they identified the sites central to the conversion of Frisia. As in Germany, accounts of churches in hagiography can often be more to do with ambition and intention than ecclesiastical organization. Liudger is notably sketchy about the churches in Utrecht, preferring instead to emphasize the activities of the saints around the *antiqua civitas*. In the context of Gregory's failure to obtain the episcopal see himself, this creates a uniting quality about the history of mission in the region. Altfrid, on the other hand, emphasized Liudger's succession to Willibrord by exclusively mentioning St Salvatore, 'quam sanctus Willibrordus construxerat'.<sup>97</sup> The *Vita altera Bonifatii*, therefore, presents a view from a different side of Utrecht with its emphasis in St Martin's. Through references to the churches in the city, the three hagiographers in the Utrecht-Münster tradition could express the patronage of Willibrord and Boniface of either episcopal or monastic institutions, depending on the context. This attests to the many ways in which the two Anglo-Saxons could be adopted by the Frisian and Saxon clergy to help legitimize their own positions in the new Christian order in the North.

<sup>93</sup> For a statement confirming that it was written at St Martin's, see *VaB*, c. 3 and c. 22.

<sup>94</sup> *VaB*, c. 3 and c. 18.

<sup>95</sup> This fact may help to confirm that Radbod of Utrecht (899–917) was not the author of the work, because he compiled a cartulary that included those charters.

<sup>96</sup> *VaB*, c. 13.

<sup>97</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 16: 'which Willibrord built'.

If Utrecht was the pastoral centre of Frisia, it was at Dokkum, on the site where Boniface had been martyred, that a true transformation of the wilderness was most clearly manifest.<sup>98</sup> In the *Vita Liudgeri*, Liudger himself was said to have constructed the church and shared pastoral duties with Adalger and Thiatbrat.<sup>99</sup> Altfrid included two poems, one by Alcuin himself, commemorating the spilling of martyrs' blood on 5 June.<sup>100</sup> Depending on chronology this either echoed or was echoed in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, which also mentioned the church:

Postea in honore tanti martirii constructa est basilica nobilis, iuxta quam fons aque dulcis emanat, cum alibi per totam regionem illam salse et amare sint aque. Et ferunt hunc fontem a Bonifacio inventum et sanctificatum esse ideoque tanta dulcedine insignitum et potationi cunctorum satis accommodum.<sup>101</sup>

Here was a clear indication of the power of the martyr, physically manifest in Frisia. The water, imitating the rites of baptism, symbolized the cleansing power of the saint for the Frisian community through the contrast between the sweetness and bitterness.<sup>102</sup> Willibald had mentioned the fountain, but with a church, and to a Frisian audience, the significance changed.<sup>103</sup> The church and fountain were perhaps doubly important because the body of the martyr was interred many miles away in Fulda, so they helped to preserve a physical bond between the Frisian people and the saint. The emotive power of Boniface dying so that the Frisians could be saved meant that he was cherished by the Frisian Church for transforming their wilderness. Frisia was no longer so remote in the world: through the saint it was now connected to the rest of (Frankish) Christendom.

<sup>98</sup> On the cult at Dokkum, see Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*, pp. 75–77; Mostert, 754, pp. 80–82 (on the later cult).

<sup>99</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 19–20.

<sup>100</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 20.

<sup>101</sup> *VaB*, c. 16: 'Afterwards our church was constructed in great honour of the martyrs, next to which a fountain of sweet water emanates, when elsewhere throughout the whole region the water was salty and bitter. And [people] come to this fountain-discovery by Boniface to be sanctified, and therefore so much remarkable sweetness and the satisfaction of all was conveniently possible.'

<sup>102</sup> On the importance of baptism to ideas of community, see Sarah Foot, '“By Water in the Spirit”: The Administration of Baptism in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 171–92 (p. 191); Julia M. H. Smith, 'Religion and Lay Society', in *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II: c. 700–c. 900, ed. by McKitterick, 654–78 (pp. 656–60).

<sup>103</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 9.

*Was Boniface 'Bishop of Utrecht'?*

With the removal of Boniface's relics to Fulda so soon after the martyrdom, the idea that the saint had had a deeper institutional connection with the see grew. Peculiar phrases in early sources to the effect that Boniface was Bishop of Utrecht led, in 1961, to a debate between C. van de Kieft and Regnerius Post.<sup>104</sup> The case revolved around the wording of a number of difficult sources. Foremost among these are two charters purporting to be from Pippin III to Boniface in May 753, one of which called Boniface 'apostolicus vir et in Christo pater Bonifatius, Traiectensis episcopus'.<sup>105</sup> Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* also came under scrutiny for a description of Boniface working from Utrecht with Eoba as his *chorepiscopus*, which might imply institutionalized office-holdings.<sup>106</sup> Finally, the letter from Boniface to Pope Stephen complaining about Hildegard of Cologne's attempts to seize control of Utrecht seems to suggest Boniface was in the process of taking control of the bishopric.<sup>107</sup> Neither van de Kieft nor Post, however, made reference to how Frisians remembered Boniface in relation to Utrecht, and in particular the distorted testimonies of Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* and the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. Those works may be untrustworthy as historical narratives — which is presumably why they were overlooked in the debate — but they still reveal much about Frisian perceptions of Boniface's role in founding the fledgling Frisian Church. It is, therefore, worth re-evaluating the debate in the light of those sources.

There are, in effect, three strands to van de Kieft's argument against Boniface having been Bishop of Utrecht. First, the charters of 753 which called Boniface *episcopus* are preserved only in a corrupt tenth-century form which is difficult to trust.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>104</sup> C. van de Kieft, 'Bonifatius en het bisdom Utrecht', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 74 (1961), 42–63 and 526–32; Regnerus R. Post, 'Is Bonifacius bisschop van Utrecht geweest?', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 74 (1961), 517–26. For two typical receptions of the debate, see Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', p. 208, and Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 336.

<sup>105</sup> MGH DD Mer., 1, nos 4–5: 'Boniface, the apostolic man and father in Christ, Bishop of Utrecht'.

<sup>106</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8.

<sup>107</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 109.

<sup>108</sup> The earliest surviving copy is in London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius C XI, fols 26<sup>v</sup>–27<sup>v</sup>, as part of a *Commemoracionem de rebus sancte Traiectensis ecclesiae*, covering the period from Charles Martel to a gift of Otto in 953. Although apparently written in an eleventh-century hand, the content could also fit a tenth-century date. Either way, the collection of charters and donations explicitly has the function of outlining Utrecht's possessions.

Secondly, none of the early writers, including Willibald, Eigil, and Liudger, said that Boniface was Bishop of Utrecht. The reference to Eoba as Boniface's *chorepiscopus* implies only that he was the bishop's assistant, not that he was specifically tied to Utrecht.<sup>109</sup> Thirdly, it would have been canonically unsound for Boniface to transfer dioceses and thus, on our traditional understanding of the saint as a conservative figure, it is unlikely he would have done so. As arguments go, the first seems sound enough. The argument about Willibald and Eigil is possible but depends on how one deals with the fact that both writers were interested in preserving and controlling some aspect of the cult of Boniface in Germany, and neither would have been helped by overemphasizing Utrecht.<sup>110</sup> On the third argument, one might point out that while Boniface was a famed critic of uncanonical practices, he was also, like many Anglo-Saxons, prepared to be flexible when it came to appointing a suitable successor within his own lifetime.<sup>111</sup> Perhaps a more pertinent argument made by van de Kieft was that 'the city of Utrecht was still no genuine episcopal residence'.<sup>112</sup> There is no evidence that the organizational basis of a Frisian diocese had developed between Willibrord's time and Boniface's. It is often tempting to project the relative order of later times back onto the past, but it is unlikely that there was much order around Frisia given the cultural and political changes it underwent in the eighth century.<sup>113</sup> Strictly speaking, therefore, the question of whether Boniface was Bishop of Utrecht is misguided because there was no real concept of a well-defined bishopric until at least the days of Alberic (775–84). The Frisian *vitae* — which van de Kieft and Post passed over — do, on the other hand, give some impression that Boniface was closely associated with the city, and should be given due consideration.

The *Vita Gregorii* appears unequivocal in its claim that Boniface 'succeeded' Willibrord at Utrecht. Liudger wrote that 'Willibrordus [...] deinde senescente eo in opere Dei, et stabilito episcopatu in loco qui nuncupatur Traiectum [...] successit

<sup>109</sup> On the role of the *chorepiscopus*, see Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 66–68.

<sup>110</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull, pp. 265–68.

<sup>111</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull, pp. 259–60. This was an Anglo-Saxon practice: see Catherine Cubitt, 'Wilfrid's Usurping Bishops: Episcopal Elections in Anglo-Saxon England c. 600–c. 800', *Northern History*, 25 (1989), 18–38 (pp. 31–32).

<sup>112</sup> Van de Kieft, 'Bonifatius en het Bisdom Utrecht', p. 526: 'de stad Utrecht nog geen echte bisschopelijke residentie was'.

<sup>113</sup> On the dangers of projecting too much order onto the northern Church, see Frans Theuws, 'Maastricht as a Centre of Power in the Early Middle Ages', in *Topographies of Power*, ed. by de Jong, Theuws, and van Rhijn, pp. 155–216 (p. 181).

Bonifatius idem archiepiscopus et martyr'.<sup>114</sup> In turn, Liudger continued, 'beatus Gregorius [. . .] successit pius heres'.<sup>115</sup> Gregory was not described as 'Bishop of Utrecht' (seeing that he was barred from the position) but rather as 'pastor gentis Fresonum'.<sup>116</sup> The verb 'succedere' did not refer to Boniface and Gregory succeeding Willibrord as bishop of a particular see, but rather to their inheritance of the mission to the Frisians. Indeed the entire emphasis of that chapter of the *Vita Gregorii* is on the conversion of Frisia as a whole and not Utrecht. Moreover, as Basilius Senger and Lutz von Padberg have argued, the purpose of the passage was to illustrate how Gregory stood in relation to his apostolic *praedecessores*, thus creating a saintly lineage.<sup>117</sup> It is a subject reiterated towards the end of the chapter: 'Eademque caritate sicut et fidei firmitate, qua praedecessores sui, sanctus videlicet Willibrordus archiepiscopus et confessor et Bonifatius martyr atque archiepiscopus, larga et melliflua eruditione populum illum irradiavit.'<sup>118</sup> Utrecht was the centre from which these operations were conducted, but with Gregory's promotion to the position of bishop barred, Frisia had no permanent bishop until Alberic's appointment late in Gregory's life.<sup>119</sup> The disruption meant that the work, not the churches, was the principal concern of the Utrecht-Münster traditions.

A similar impression can be gained from the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. It has been argued that an early version of the work had been a source for Liudger, and indeed on the account of Boniface's 'succession' to Utrecht there are comparisons to be made.<sup>120</sup> The priest of St Martin's, unlike Liudger, described Willibrord and Boniface working closely together, employing the typically idiosyncratic metaphor 'sicut in quodam codice scriptum repperi'.<sup>121</sup> Thereafter they went their separate ways, the priest wrote, until

<sup>114</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 10: '[When Willibrord] grew old in the work of God, he established his episcopate in a place called Utrecht [. . . and] St Boniface, the archbishop and martyr, succeeded him'.

<sup>115</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 10: 'blessed Gregory succeeded him as his heir'.

<sup>116</sup> On the barriers to Gregory's promotion, see Chapter 3, pp. 92–93.

<sup>117</sup> Senger, 'Liudger in der Utrechter Väter-Tradition', p. 345; von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, p. 137; Mostert, 'Bonifatius als geschiedvervalser', p. 220.

<sup>118</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 10: 'With love and firmness of faith just like his predecessors — namely St Willibrord, the archbishop and confessor, and Boniface, the martyr and archbishop — [Gregory] illuminated [the Frisians] with long and sweet erudition.'

<sup>119</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 10.

<sup>120</sup> On the *VaB* (or a version of it) as the source for Liudger, see Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 102–07.

<sup>121</sup> *VaB*, c. 9: 'just as certain scripts are bound together into a codex'.



Cum beatus Bonifatius in Moguntine sedis presultatu plurimis diebus Domino ministrasset, revelata est ei Willibrordi sanctissimi episcopi carnalis depositio et ad celestem gloriam transmigratio, statimque sensit fortis athleta, sibi iterum peram cum lapidis suis sumendum, iterum cum Golyath Phylistheo bellum gerendum. Ac nequaquam incertus, quid ageret — Spiritus enim sanctus eidem omnia revelabat — confestim navigio illuc properavit, ubi cum dyabolo totis viribus certaturus erat, moxque per undas Reni fluminis notissimo sibi loco, id est Traiecto oppido, delatus est.<sup>122</sup>

There is some substantial historical displacement in this story: Willibrord died in Echternach in 739 and Boniface did not, to our knowledge, return to Utrecht until 753. The account of the *Vita altera Bonifatii* has been largely ignored because of such inaccuracies. However, by dismissing it out of hand one misses the crucial fact that the Frisians thought that it was desirable to point to a smooth succession from Willibrord to Boniface. This was not, however, a transition between ‘bishops of Utrecht’. The St Martin’s priest, like Liudger, commented simply that Willibrord came to reside (*subsedere*) in Utrecht late in his life, not that he was ‘Bishop of Utrecht’ in any meaningful, institutionalized sense of the phrase. Boniface, meanwhile, simply arrived and went into the mission field without undertaking any pastoral duties. The task that Boniface was said to have succeeded to was the conversion of the Frisians, not the care of a diocese of Utrecht. Once again the way the past was assembled set out an extended Christian foundation history for Utrecht that bound its churches to its saints, but only through the active missionary life.

### *Foundations in Saxony*

The motif of the wilderness was less commonly employed in early medieval Saxony. In part this is a reflection of the evidence; as Ian Wood has argued, Saxony lacks the kind of dominant hagiographical figures around which narratives of conversion and Christianization could be developed.<sup>123</sup> Hagiographers in the ninth century

<sup>122</sup> *VaB*, c. 13: ‘When the blessed Boniface had ministered in the bishop’s seat of Mainz for many Sundays, it was revealed to him that the most sacred bishop Willibrord had disposed of his body and passed over to the glory of Heaven. Immediately the athlete felt strong, again taking up his bag of stones, again taking on war against Goliath of the Philistines. And not uncertain of what was to be done — for the Holy Spirit revealed all to him — he speedily travelled there by boat, where he would fight all the diabolical men, and soon he was carried down the flowing River Rhine to his most famous place, that is the fort of Utrecht.’

<sup>123</sup> Ian Wood, ‘An Absence of Saints? The Evidence for the Christianisation of Saxony’, in *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung: Das Epos ‘Karolus Magnus et Leo papa’ und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799*, ed. by Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut, and Peter Johanek (Berlin, 2002), pp. 335–52.

still had much to say. The ‘horrendum desertum’ Eigil had created for Sturm touched upon the wild nature of the frontier, but when it came to describing Saxony itself the imagery was not stretched northwards.<sup>124</sup> Hagiographers in Saxony often preferred a sense of pride and ownership. The late ninth-century *Translatio s. Liborii*, for example, described the setting of Paderborn as a real land of milk and honey.<sup>125</sup> Altfrid, meanwhile, repeatedly emphasized that Liudger’s monastic foundation at Werden had been founded on family lands rather than in a wilderness.<sup>126</sup> Saxony was no desert in the historical imagination of ninth-century hagiographers.

It was left for the representations of the Saxons themselves to provide a bleak setting for new foundations. Several writers characterized the Saxons as a ‘rudis populus’ or something similar.<sup>127</sup> The sense of danger posed by them is quite tangible. Unrelated traditions had Sturm, Liudger, and Willehad fleeing for their lives, Willehad surviving an axe-blow only through a miracle.<sup>128</sup> Rudolf of Fulda linked the people and the environment in the *Translatio s. Alexandri*, but it was only to sketch how the plains, mountains, and woodland of Saxony provided an arena for the violence of the inhabitants.<sup>129</sup> The defining moment for all writers was the rebellion of ‘Duke’ Widukind in 782, which followed early Frankish success in Westphalia. Widukind’s submission in 785 was widely cited as the beginning of a new Christian era.<sup>130</sup> In the course of Charlemagne’s thirty-three-year conflict with the Saxons, it was the most tangible moment in which a rival political leader had been defeated. The brutality of the Saxons and the process of their

<sup>124</sup> Compare Eigil, *VS*, c. 7 and c. 23.

<sup>125</sup> *Translatio s. Liborii*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 4 (Hannover, 1841), c. 3: ‘vocant terram lactae et maellae manantem’.

<sup>126</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I, 21, 27, and 30.

<sup>127</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I, 23; *Translatio s. Liborii*, c. 2. The sketch of warlike, perfidious, pagan Saxons from Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 8, was also widely adapted, for example in Rudolf, *Translatio s. Alexandri*, c. 3.

<sup>128</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 23; Altfrid, *VLger*, I, 21; *VWhad*, c. 6.

<sup>129</sup> Rudolf and Meginhard, *Translatio s. Alexandri*, c. 3. A note in the margin of the sole surviving manuscript indicates that Rudolf wrote the first three chapters of the *Translatio* — a Tacitus-inspired overview of the Saxons — and Meginhard composed the account of the translation itself.

<sup>130</sup> *VWhad*, c. 6; Altfrid, *VLger*, I, 21; Rudolf, *Translatio s. Alexandri*, c. 3; *Translatio s. Viti*, ed. by Irene Schmale-Ott, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Westfalen, 41. 1 (Münster, 1979), c. 4. The *Translatio s. Liborii*, c. 2, and *Translatio s. Pussinae*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 2 (Hannover, 1829), c. 1, omit the role of Widukind but still begin with the conquests of Charlemagne. Widukind’s rebellion is mentioned in *ARF*, s.a. 782 and his submission in *ARF*, s.a. 785.

subsequent subjugation to Frankish rule replaced the need for an imaginative transformation of the landscape.

The spread of churches and monasteries across Saxony progressed into a second kind of wilderness, this time a real one.<sup>131</sup> If Erfurt and Büraburg had barely passed muster as *civitates*, Saxony offered few centres more expansive. A famous passage from the *Translatio s. Liborii* observed that in fact there were no cities in which to base new episcopal sees, so Charlemagne had had to divide up the region himself.<sup>132</sup> To what extent Charlemagne had really been in a position to do this remains debatable. But Paderborn's account of the Saxon wars was anyway based upon a passage in Eigil's *Vita Sturmi* which had claimed that the King had divided Saxony into *parochiae* but without any comment about cities.<sup>133</sup> This idea suited Paderborn well because it had been built up quickly out of very little to provide a palatial centre for Charlemagne's Saxon activities.<sup>134</sup> Without a longstanding urban past, Saxon writers could employ 'civilized' Latin literature to legitimize the new. The heightened rhetoric of emptiness nevertheless pointed towards a broader truth: that there was more flexibility in the foundations of Saxony than there had been in Frisia or Germania.

Anglo-Saxon interest in Saxony did not profit clearly from Charlemagne's activities and the new organization he was creating. Lull is often cited in modern scholarship as one of the guiding influences on developments in the region in the early years of the war.<sup>135</sup> There is, however, virtually no evidence to suggest that he played any direct role; the refoundation of Hersfeld and its landholdings marked the extent, not the beginning, of Lull's Saxon work. Ambitions no doubt remained, as the *Vita Bonifatii* suggests, and here things could become competitive. Eigil, for instance, claimed that Charlemagne entrusted 'pars maxima [. . .] populi et terrae illius' to Sturm,

<sup>131</sup> On the emergence of church organization, see now Ehlers, *Die Integration*, and Peter Johanek, 'Der Ausbau der sächsischen Kirchenorganisation', in *799: Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III in Paderborn*, ed. by Christoph Steigemann and Matthias Wemhoff, 3 vols (Mainz, 1999), II, 494–506.

<sup>132</sup> *Translatio s. Liborii*, c. 2. Explicit references to this action can be found in Eigil, *VS*, c. 23, and Rimbert, *VA*, c. 12.

<sup>133</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 23.

<sup>134</sup> Karl Hauck, 'Karl als neuer Konstantin 777: die archäologischen Entdeckungen in Paderborn in historischer Sicht', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 20 (1986), 513–40; Manfred Balzer, 'Paderborn – Zentralort der Karolinger im Sachsen des späten 8. und frühen 9. Jahrhunderts', in *799: Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Steigemann and Wemhoff, I, 116–23.

<sup>135</sup> Johanek, 'Der Ausbau', p. 497; Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, p. 215.

who made sure that every region had a church.<sup>136</sup> This is a curious claim given that Fulda's influence on Saxon foundations seems to have come only later, and then mainly in the Lerigau.<sup>137</sup> It is, however, a claim that would have made Sturm (and therefore Fulda) the true heir to the Bonifatian mission in contrast to Lull (and therefore the bishops of Mainz). Fulda and Mainz played a variety of roles as centres of authority and learning, but the foundation of churches in Saxony had little to do with the Bonifatian mission except in the hagiographical imagination.

Beyond hagiographical discourse, things were complicated by a new wave of Anglo-Saxon influences which coincided with the early reign of Charlemagne. The court of King Alchred of Northumbria (765–74) was the driving force here. In 767, according to the York Annals, Aluberht was ordained in York as the first bishop of the Old Saxons without any Frankish involvement.<sup>138</sup> This is never explicitly acknowledged in continental sources, although Altfrid thought that Aluberht had been ordained by Archbishop Ælred of York at the request of Gregory of Utrecht, not that it is said of what Aluberht had been made bishop.<sup>139</sup> If Alchred had ambitions of binding the Saxon Church to his own, he pledged nothing but support for Charlemagne once the Saxon wars began, and his man Willehad became Charlemagne's first Bishop of Wigmodia in 785. Further Northumbrian missionaries may be indicated by a letter of Alcuin's to Willehad's circle and the fact that Willehad's successor, Willeric, was also his countryman.<sup>140</sup> Anglo-Saxon foundations in Saxony relied squarely on Frankish backing.

The new generation of Northumbrian missionaries dovetailed neatly with the growing missionary ambitions of Gregory and Liudger in Utrecht.<sup>141</sup> Cooperation was best represented in the foundation of the church of Deventer. Altfrid tells the story of how in the early 770s Gregory was approached by Liafwine (St Lebuin), who wished to preach 'in confinio Francorum atque Saxonum'.<sup>142</sup> Gregory

<sup>136</sup> Eigil, *VS*, cc. 23–24: 'The greater part of the people and their land'.

<sup>137</sup> Ehlers, *Die Integration*, pp. 102–10.

<sup>138</sup> York Annals, s.a. 767 = Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, I. 46. Johanek, 'Der Ausbau', p. 496; Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull', p. 272; Story, *Carolingian Connections*, p. 99.

<sup>139</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 10. Liudger, *VG*, c. 10, complicates matters further by calling Aluberht Gregory's 'chorepiscopus et adiutor'.

<sup>140</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 6; *VWhad*, c. 11; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, I. 14 (15)–18 (20). Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull', pp. 272–73.

<sup>141</sup> Gregory sending Liudger to be educated by Alcuin in York, of course, also demonstrates the openness of Frisian Christian culture.

<sup>142</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 13: 'in the confines of the Franks and Saxons'.

entrusted him with a *parochia* to the east, where he was received by a woman called Averhilda, who helped him to construct an oratory at Wilp and a church at Deventer. The Saxons, however, burnt the church down and forced Liafwinn to retreat to the safety of Utrecht; like in Fulda and Fritzlar, the victory over topography was to be as hard fought as the battle over souls. Liafwinn was later able to return, but after his death the Saxons burnt the church down again. After Gregory's death, Liudger was sent by Alberic to rebuild the church, but unable to find Liafwinn's body, he had to guess where it was and build a new church on that spot: 'et in loco illo per servum suum Liafwinnum Dominus multas virtutes operatur usque in hodiernum diem, ubi est etiam nunc coenobium canonicorum Domino famulantium'.<sup>143</sup> It was the combination of saints and infrastructure which transformed the region into a Christian territory.

Missionary saints like Liudger and Willehad were rendered surprisingly marginal in the foundation legends of Saxony because of the way the cult of saints developed.<sup>144</sup> The second half of the eighth century and first half of the ninth witnessed a dramatic increase in relic translations, triggered by the decision of Pope Paul I (757–67) to allow Roman relics to leave the city.<sup>145</sup> Nobles and clergy seeking authentic saints for intercession could thus procure them from elsewhere, whether the saint had a connection with the region or not. Liudger himself started the trend by obtaining (perhaps implausibly) relics of St Salvatore, St Mary, and St Peter from Rome.<sup>146</sup> He did not, however, use them to create a *locus sancti* except for a brief period housing the relics in Wichmond, preferring instead to carry them around with him to inspire local piety.<sup>147</sup> The use of imported relics to create

<sup>143</sup> Altfred, *VLger*, I. 13: 'And up to the present day, the Lord performed many miracles through his servant Liafwinn in that place, where there is now a monastery of canons serving the Lord.' On this description of Deventer and its wider context, see Angenendt, *Liudger*, p. 109, and Rudolf Schieffer, 'Die Anfänge der westfälischen Domstifte', *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, 138 (1988), 175–91.

<sup>144</sup> See now Hedwig Röckelein, *Reliquientranslationen nach Sachen im 9. Jahrhundert*, Beihefte der Francia, 48 (Stuttgart, 2002).

<sup>145</sup> On the wider context of relic translations (and thefts) in the ninth century, see Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1978); Julia M. H. Smith, 'Old Saints, New Cults: Roman Relics in Carolingian Francia', in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West*, ed. by Smith, pp. 317–39.

<sup>146</sup> References to Liudger carrying the relics around with him can be found in *De oudste particuliere oorkonden*, ed. by Blok, nos 19–21. Angenendt, *Liudger*, p. 116.

<sup>147</sup> For the relics in Wichmond in 796, see *De oudste particuliere oorkonden*, no. 10.

sacred places began only in the 830s with the translations of St Vitus to Corvey and St Liborius of Le Mans to Paderborn.<sup>148</sup> It was not just the act of relocating saints which transformed the landscape: the first generations of Saxon hagiography were dominated by accounts of the translations, providing the active story-based content of the cult of saints through miracles and outpourings of popular piety. Translation narratives quickly took on the function of foundation narratives.<sup>149</sup> When Duke Waltbert — a descendant of Widukind's — decided to found a new community at Wildeshausen in c. 851, he obtained the relics of St Alexander from Rome, and commissioned the monks of Fulda to write a text to support him.<sup>150</sup> In Saxony, founding missionary saints were not as essential to the Christianization of the region as they had been elsewhere.

Competition between new foundations found a natural expression in the cult of saints. The *Vita Willehadi*, for example, followed the traditions of many missionary hagiographies by keeping posthumous miracles to a minimum; but with the arrival of St Alexander's relics in nearby Wildeshausen, Bishop Anskar went on the offensive and produced an account of the miracles performed at Willehad's tomb in Bremen.<sup>151</sup> Two stories explicitly stated that people healed by praying in Wildeshausen were made even better by subsequently praying for Willehad's intercession.<sup>152</sup> Willehad's *potentia* was stronger than his older 'rivals'. Healing miracles established a 'vertical model of dependence' which bound the health of the community to the intercession of the saint.<sup>153</sup> In a competitive environment it paid — often literally — to promote the *potentia* of specific saints and shrines. The ninth-century *vitae* about St Liudger each concluded with catalogues of miracles which served to elucidate the geographical extent of Liudger's posthumous power.<sup>154</sup> It is worth

<sup>148</sup> Röckelein, *Reliquientranslationen*, pp. 174–84 (on St Vitus) and pp. 241–60 (on Waltbert's relic collection).

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Smith, 'Old Saints, New Cults', p. 330.

<sup>150</sup> Rulolf and Meginhart, *Translatio s. Alexandri*.

<sup>151</sup> Anskar, *Miracula Willehadi*. The preface links the outbreak of miracles with Viking attacks in 860. On the text, see Hedwig Röckelein, 'Miracles and Horizontal Mobility in the Early Middle Ages: Some Methodological Reflections', in *The Community, the Family and the Saint*, ed. by Joyce Hill and Mary Swan, International Medieval Research, 4 (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 181–97.

<sup>152</sup> Anskar, *Miracula Willehadi*, cc. 11–12.

<sup>153</sup> Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, p. 118.

<sup>154</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, II; *Vita Liudgeri secunda*, II. The most extreme example is the story of one Adam, who prayed for forgiveness in Rome and Nivelles before finding his salvation in Werden (Altfrid, *VLger*, II. 9).

comparing these hagiographical traditions with missionary *vitae* from elsewhere, which keep the posthumous miracles to a bare minimum — one text, the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, actively playing down their significance.<sup>155</sup> The popularity of *miracula* as extensions of missionary hagiographies in Saxony is a reflection of the popularity of older saints and the formative spiritual topography emerging in the North.

The clear advantage of missionary saints was their connection in life to local places. It is notable that the first hagiographical accounts of Willehad and Liudger appeared at around the same time in the 840s at a point where the relationship between saints and places needed renewed articulation. The death of Emperor Louis the Pious in 840 had prompted disputes among his sons over the division of the empire. Saxony featured prominently in the unfolding drama. Lothar, the eldest son, bought support in the region in exchange for the return of pagan laws, while his brother, Louis the German, brutally put down a 'pagan' uprising by the *Stellinga* in 842.<sup>156</sup> The experience of the early 840s marked a watershed in the history of the region, and thereafter families such as the Widukind-Sippe and Liudolfings started to take more of a lead in the shaping of Christian topography.<sup>157</sup> Resolution of the civil war at Verdun in 843, meanwhile, presented new problems for the organization of the North.<sup>158</sup> A new division of the empire nominally emphasized regional coherence, but to maintain equivalence Lothar took Frisia and Louis Saxony, thus splitting two closely related regions. Episcopal organization was affected too, with Bremen and Münster placed in Louis's kingdom while their metropolitan, Cologne, was placed in Lothar's. The clumsiness of the Treaty of Verdun tore at the cultural, political, and ecclesiastical unity that had been created in the North.

<sup>155</sup> *VaB*, c. 20. The main exceptions amongst the texts considered in this study are Lupus's *VWig* (where they make up for the lack of information on living activities) and Alcuin's *VW*, cc. 26–30. On the preference for 'living' miracles in imitation of biblical models, see Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, esp. pp. 44–51 and 57–65; MacCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede*, pp. 16–43.

<sup>156</sup> Nithard, *Historia*, ed. by Georg H. Pertz, MGH SRG, 44 (Hannover, 1870), IV. 2. On the *Stellinga* uprising, see Eric J. Goldberg, 'Popular Revolt, Dynastic Politics and Aristocratic Factionalism in the Early Middle Ages: The Saxon *Stellinga* Reconsidered', *Speculum*, 70 (1995), 467–501; Christopher J. Carroll, 'The Bishoprics of Saxony in the First Century after Christianisation', *EME*, 8 (1999), 219–45.

<sup>157</sup> Ehlers, *Die Integration*, p. 308.

<sup>158</sup> On Verdun 843, see Ganshof, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Bedeutung'; Peter Classen, 'Die Verträge von Verdun und von Coulaines 843 als politische Grundlagen des westfränkischen Reiches', *Historisches Zeitschrift*, 196 (1963), 1–35; Thomas Bauer, 'Die *Ordinatio imperii* von 817, der Vertrag von Verdun 843 und Herausbildung Lotharingens', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, 58 (1994), 1–24.



Discerning the precise nature of the *Vita Willehadi* as a response to 843 depends on where the text was written. Gerlinde Niemeyer argued in 1956 that it was written in Echternach because it reported Willehad's stay in the monastery, because it was influenced by the *Vita Willibrordi*, and because Echternach later celebrated the cult of Willehad.<sup>159</sup> None of these points are telling and are considerably weakened by other evidence showing the *Vita Willibrordi*'s circulation in Westphalia and Willehad's absence from Echternach's sanctoral cycle as late as 895.<sup>160</sup> Arguments against the text's origins in Bremen also lack force. Niemeyer's concern that Anskar's *Miracula Willehadi* showed no knowledge of the *Vita* misunderstands the relationship between the texts: the *Miracula* extended the account of the *Vita* and followed it in all surviving manuscripts, making repetition unnecessary.<sup>161</sup> Of greater importance for locating the text are the concerns for the geographical extent of the diocese of Bremen and the translation of Willehad's bodily remains from Blexen to Bremen shortly after his death in 789.<sup>162</sup> These emphases in the *Vita* make a Bremen origin more likely.

The effort to describe Willehad's original diocese demonstrates some of the problems the settlement of 843 created. The chapter that dealt with the establishment of the diocese of Bremen is careful in its detail:

Post haec [. . .] praecellentissimus princeps, in Wormatia positus civitate, servum Dei Willehadum consecrari fecit episcopum [...] constituitque eum pastorum atque rectorum super Wigmodia et Laras et Riustri et Asterga, necnon Nordendi ac Wanga, ut inibi auctoritate episcopali et praeeset populis.<sup>163</sup>

Most of these territories presented no problem, with Wigmodia in particular representing the territory Charlemagne had originally earmarked for Willehad. The case of Rüstringen was less straightforward because not only had it been claimed for

<sup>159</sup> Niemeyer, 'Die Herkunft der *Vita Willehadi*'. Her arguments have recently found favour in Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 98 (n. 126). For judicious criticisms of the Echternach hypothesis, see Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, vi, 838.

<sup>160</sup> *The Sacramentary of Echternach*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen, Henry Bradshaw Society, 110 (London, 1997), with calendar pp. 56–76 and litany pp. 82–84.

<sup>161</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS nat. lat. 9738 (Echternach, xi<sup>1</sup>); Münster, Staatsarchiv, MS I B 228 (Paderborn, xi<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>162</sup> *VWbad*, c. 11.

<sup>163</sup> *VWbad*, c. 8: 'The excellent prince Charles, then in the city of Worms, had Willehad consecrated bishop [. . . and] appointed him pastor and rector over Wigmodia, Laras, Rüstringen, and Östringen, as well as Norden and Wangerland, so that he might lead the people there with episcopal authority.' See also on Wigmodia, Brigitte Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg: Erzbistumsgründung und Missionspolitik in karolingischer Zeit* (Berlin, 1991), p. 207.

Lotharingia, but since 826 it had nominally been under the control of Harald Klak, the mercenary exiled Danish king whose son was Lothar's godson.<sup>164</sup> The position of Norden even further west is less certain still in the sources until it reappears under the control of Rimbert of Hamburg-Bremen in 884; its geographical position, however, suggests that it too had been placed in Lotharingia.<sup>165</sup> We thus find that the *Vita Willehadi* made claims for lands to the west of Bremen in the 840s that the diocese had almost certainly lost in the course of the reorganization at Verdun, if not before.

The saintly work of Willehad and his colleagues became central to the defence of Bremen. In the narrative buildup to Bremen's foundation, martyrs from among Willehad's followers are listed: Folcardus the priest and Count Emmiggus in Laras, Benjamin in Rüstringen, the cleric Atrebanus in Ditmarschen Berg, and Gerwalus with his company in Bremen.<sup>166</sup> The geographical range of Willehad's mission was also given prominence. He is described as preaching with great success at Dokkum before travelling along the River Lauwers, first to Hunsingo to the north of modern Groningen, and then to Drenthe to the south of Groningen.<sup>167</sup> What is striking here is the care taken to describe journeys through eastern Frisia. The region had no obvious episcopal presence despite claims that Utrecht and Münster could put forth, so it raises the issue of whether the *Vita Willehadi* made a claim for Bremen's spiritual authority there through Willehad. It was not included as part of the defined diocese, but that did not mean that the story of Willehad's mission was merely decorative. The building of the actual physical church in Bremen only late on when a perfect site had been found meant that the totality of Willehad's work culminated in church building and then, after he died, his translation to the church.<sup>168</sup> As was common elsewhere, the stories surrounding the person who founded a church contributed to the expanded definition of the church as the central point of a territory and as a *locus sancti*.

<sup>164</sup> *ARF*, s.a. 826; Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hludowici*, IV. lines 147–746.

<sup>165</sup> *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 884: 'Nordmanni cum Frisionibus in loco, qui vocatur Norditi, dimicantes superantur et plurimi ex eis occiduntur. Super quo proedio extat epistola Rinberti episcopi eiusdem loci ad Liutbertum Mogontiensem archiepiscopum destinata hunc modum continens'. The letter, unfortunately, is not included in any manuscript of the annals or elsewhere.

<sup>166</sup> *VWbad*, c. 6: 'Folcardum presbiterum cum Emmiggo comite in pago denominato Leri, Benjamin autem in Ubhriustri, Atrebanum vero clericum in Thietmaresgaho, Gerwalum quoque cum sociis suis in Brema.'

<sup>167</sup> *VWbad*, cc. 3–4.

<sup>168</sup> *VWbad*, cc. 9–11.

In some senses Altfrid's *Vita Liudgeri* presented a missionary narrative that competed with Bremen's. It is notable that neither *vita* mentions the other saint, and no connection was made between them until Adam of Bremen came to re-package the story of the Anglo-Saxon missions in Saxony in the eleventh century.<sup>169</sup> For the Liudgeriden, of course, landholdings created a social coherence across Frisia and Saxony which the divisions of Verdun ignored.<sup>170</sup> It may be telling that in the 840s Altfrid's circle produced a cartulary which defended the family's legal claims to land west to the Yssel.<sup>171</sup> Altfrid's missionary narrative could be read as a narrative articulation of this coherence in the face of uncertain political developments. The problem for any appeal to the past, however, was that while Münster and Werden shared an association with Liudger, the former had become a bishopric while the latter had become part of the neighbouring archdiocese of Cologne.

The narrative of Liudger's work in Westphalia needed to work hard to bring unity to the Frisian and Westphalian past. After the early emphasis on Frisia, it is striking that Altfrid draws attention to Werden's status as inheritable land three times in order to make his point clear.<sup>172</sup> Like the author of the *Vita Willehadi*, he also spelt out the lands attached to his saint's foundation: Hugmarch, Hunsingo, Fivelingo, Emsgau, and Federitgau — all of which are near Groningen — and the island of Bant (only a few miles from Norden). These constitute at least in part the same lands that Willehad had allegedly evangelized. To consolidate on his claim, Altfrid also claimed that the eastern Frisians 'prius non haberent episcopum' in order to justify Münster's episcopal authority over them through Liudger.<sup>173</sup> The foundation of Münster itself was, like Bremen, part of Charlemagne's plan to carve up Westphalia; but Altfrid reversed the order of the foundation of Werden (before 799) and Münster (793) in his narrative in order to make Liudger's promotion symbolic of the furthest geographical extension of the family's work. He then tied it all to the unifying authority of Cologne by promoting the role of the archbishops in ordaining

<sup>169</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, 1. 11 (12).

<sup>170</sup> On some of the overlaps in Frisia and Westphalia, see Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs*, I, 101–05; van Egmond, 'Converting Monks'.

<sup>171</sup> *De oudeste particuliere oorkonden*. For a recent view on the key manuscript — Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS Voss. Lat. Q 4. 55 — see Arnold Angenendt, 'Liudger: Lehrer – Missionar – Klostergründer – Bischof – Heiliger', in *805: Liudger wird Bischof*, ed. by Isenberg and Rommé, pp. 91–105 (p. 103).

<sup>172</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 21, 27, and 32.

<sup>173</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 24: 'had hitherto not had a bishop'.

Liudger.<sup>174</sup> As in the *Vita Willehadi*, the building of churches represented the institutionalization of the saint's authority over a contested geographical area.

### *Conclusion*

The new foundations and refoundations of the Anglo-Saxon missions created a new world for the communities they touched. In conjunction with the challenge to pagan shrines and the cooperation with noble families, the foundations played a central role in redefining spiritual topographies and social relations. Imagined wildernesses became fully integrated into the (Frankish) Christian world, even if in reality they had never been particularly wild or remote. The impression of transformation was all the more potent for dramatizing the spiritual journey of different communities with starker contrasts than missionaries and founding fathers had actually encountered. Buildings provided the symbolic and physical infrastructure which made it all apparent. These were not just the focal points for communal action through the cult of saints; these were also the manifestations of cultural change and triumph.

These discourses played an important role in the formation of identities. The idea of a patron saint is of course a familiar one, and the geographical and social parameters of patronage were as flexible and changing as the world which needed them. These could, however, be pinned down for a particular audience or at a certain time through the telling of stories in relation to places. For the St Martin's priest, for example, it was the juxtaposition of stories about Boniface with descriptions of churches and a plea for the spiritual unity of Utrecht, Dokkum, Mainz, and Fulda which set out the extent of Boniface's power. Stories of saintly activities and posthumous miracles defined what a saint meant geographically and socially, whatever the political situation, as the examples of Liudger and Willehad demonstrate. With competition between Mainz and Fulda, the churches in Utrecht, and between centres in Saxony, there were a range of discourses ongoing in which saint-definition was useful. The missions and the cult of saints had not just provided Christian foundations in the North, but had subsequently provided communities with the kind of cultural capital with which they could pursue new ends and redefine their place in the world.

<sup>174</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 23 (Liudger). See also I. 15 for Cologne's role in the appointment of Alberic in Utrecht.

## MONASTICISM

Religious houses represented the backbone of the ‘new’ religious discipline the Anglo-Saxons brought to the Frankish Church. Monasticism was integral to Christian order, a *regula vita*, making order and particularly ‘the right kind’ of order essential to the community writ large. The interaction between the cloistered and secular worlds was the cause of much concern as tensions between the contemplative life and the active life abounded, here as in most early medieval missions.<sup>1</sup> The career transition from regulated monk to correcting pastor brought strict ideals to the wider world but also forced compromise or conflict.<sup>2</sup> Merovingian monasticism included solutions that were not to everyone’s taste, with independent and protected foundations lending themselves too easily to factional politics.<sup>3</sup> The Anglo-Saxon missions coincided with or drove (depending on modern inclination) a move in the eighth century towards a more explicitly Benedictine monasticism as part of a *regula vita* better integrated into the Frankish Church.<sup>4</sup> Saints’ Lives played a pivotal role by providing *exempla pro imitatione* for all, with behaviour appropriate to the shifting normative standards of the Carolingians and Franks. In this context representations of Anglo-Saxon saints provided both idealized images for some and, elsewhere, illustrations of things to be avoided.

Attitudes towards the saints of the ‘Anglo-Saxon missions’ were defined by a range of monastic ideals. Monastic institutions in England, Ireland, Gaul, and

<sup>1</sup> Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 17–23.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Heinemeyer, ‘Bonifatius – Mönch und Reform’, in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 63–94.

<sup>3</sup> Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*.

<sup>4</sup> De Jong, ‘Carolingian Monasticism’, pp. 622–53; Claussen, *Reform of the Frankish Church*.

Rome all had different customs and definitions of a vigorous life, and the wide-ranging activities of the 'missions' meant that the ideal monastic saint constantly had to be renegotiated. The first half of the chapter will survey the nature of these varied practices. In addition to variation across space, there were different moments which prompted a heightened sense of what constituted monastic discipline. A significant rupture in perceptions of the saints in this study occurred in the early ninth century with the reforms of Benedict of Aniane under Louis the Pious; although in many ways an extension of existing ideals, the intensification of (at the very least) reform rhetoric encouraged people to reassess the monastic life through the saintly past. As hagiography served to hold a mirror up to the values of the present, so saints became representative of ideals which they may not have held themselves. The second half of this chapter will analyse the importance of the *anianischen* reforms for changes in what Frankish audiences needed the saints of the 'Anglo-Saxon missions' to stand for when it came to monastic discipline.

One must take care in assessing the influence of 'reform movements'. Striving to improve one's soul was fully part of the spiritual journey Augustine latterly envisaged for the peregrinating City of God as it moved away from worldliness.<sup>5</sup> Monastic discipline was a subject much discussed at church synods throughout the centuries, leading to a variety of proclamations intended to set new standards and (re)capture old ideals. Historians have, however, become increasingly wary of the word 'reform'. Theodor Schieffer and Timothy Reuter both pointed out that the idea of returning the Church to an earlier, purer state was an anachronism projected back by modern historians from the eleventh-century Gregorian reform movement.<sup>6</sup> The emphasis in the sources is on *renovatio* and *correctio*, not the more theologically charged *reformatio* used by Augustine.<sup>7</sup> The notion that there were distinct 'movements' seems problematical at times too: there were rarely any discernible 'parties' and there were many continuities between different periods.<sup>8</sup> As

<sup>5</sup> M. A. Claussen, 'Peregrinatio and peregrini in Augustine's City of God', *Traditio*, 46 (1991), 32–75 (pp. 46–47).

<sup>6</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1434–35; Reuter, "Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik", pp. 39–40.

<sup>7</sup> Reuter, "Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik", pp. 40–41. Julia Barrow, 'Chrodegang, his Rule, and its Successors', *EME*, 14 (2006), 201–12 (p. 208).

<sup>8</sup> For typical examples of writings about 'parties', see Heinrich Büttner, 'Bonifatius und die Karolinger', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 4 (1954), 21–36 (pp. 32–35), and Ewig, 'Milo'. On the overlaps that can exist between different 'movements', see Joyce Hill, *Bede and the Benedictine Reform*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1998).

imagined coherence and polarity fall away in the face of the sources, 'reform' can appear like another tyrannical construct imposed upon our source material.<sup>9</sup> Hagiographies and their saints, we should remember, reflect individual takes on different ideals.

### *Benedict Before Boniface*

In the Middle Ages arguably the most influential monastic rule was that commonly ascribed to St Benedict of Nursia (d. c. 550).<sup>10</sup> It is important to remember from the outset that there was no such thing as a 'Benedictine order' until later centuries. In his own time, the author described his Rule simply as 'a little rule for beginners'.<sup>11</sup> It provided a set of guidelines intended to regulate communal religious life, covering topics such as the entry of novices into the monastery, the way the community was to elect abbots, and how a monk was to divide his day between manual work, contemplation and prayer, and sleep. These activities were expected to take place on one communal site so, as was seen in Chapter 1, monks were expected to remain in their home monastery.<sup>12</sup> The author of the Benedictine *regula* was indebted to earlier Rules such as Caesarius of Arles's *Regula monachorum* and *Regula virginum*.<sup>13</sup> It also drew inspiration from *regulae* such as the *Regula magistri*, although where that contained an autocratic conception of the community led by the abbot, Benedict was at pains to create a more inclusive form of cenobitical

<sup>9</sup> Compare Elizabeth A. R. Brown, 'The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe', *American Historical Review*, 79 (1974), 1063–88.

<sup>10</sup> The classic study on the Rule of Benedict is Adalbert de Vogüé, *La communauté et l'abbé dans la règle de s. Benoît* (Paris, 1961), trans. by C. Philippi and E. Perkins, *Community and Abbot in the Rule of St Benedict*, 2 vols (Kalamazoo, 1979–88). A useful summary of the nature of the Rule can be found in C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, 3rd edn (Harlow, 2001), pp. 18–38. On the anonymity of the *regula*, see Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 101–28.

<sup>11</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti*, ed. by Adalbert de Vogüé and Jean Neufville, SC, 181–86 (Paris, 1971–77), c. 73: 'minimam [...] regulam descriptam adiuuante'.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 60–61, and *Regula s. Benedicti*, c. 1 and c. 61.

<sup>13</sup> Caesarius, *Regula monachorum*, ed. by Joël Courreau and Adalbert de Vogüé, SC, 398 (Paris, 1994), pp. 204–26; Caesarius, *Regula virginum*, ed. by Joël Courreau and Adalbert de Vogüé, SC, 345 (Paris, 1988), pp. 170–273; *Regula magistri*, ed. by Adalbert de Vogüé, *La Règle du Maître*, SC 105–07 (Paris, 1964). See Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 111–37; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, pp. 22–23.



living.<sup>14</sup> It was the brethren, for example, who were expected to choose new abbots, rather than the previous abbot.<sup>15</sup> As will be seen below, these considerations were of great importance in monasteries such as Fulda in the eighth and ninth centuries.

The *Regula s. Benedicti* was rarely followed in a pure form in European monasteries before the ninth century. Its dissemination was in fact quite slow, being rare even in Roman monasteries before the tenth century because of a resistance there to the ideas of Gregory the Great.<sup>16</sup> Gregory never lost his love of monastic living and may have played a role in the popularization of the *Regula s. Benedicti*, even though it is unlikely he followed the Rule himself.<sup>17</sup> He was popularly believed to have been the author of a *Dialogi* — including a full hagiographical discussion of Benedict — in response to the Lombard destruction of Benedict's monastery at Monte Cassino in 577.<sup>18</sup> The idea that the *Regula s. Benedicti* denotes *romanitas* is tied deeply to the reception of Gregorian traditions, particularly in Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>19</sup> Far

<sup>14</sup> *Regula magistri*; Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, p. 120; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 24. Dunn has challenged the accepted view of the *Regula s. Benedicti* by claiming it came before the *Regula magistri*: see her 'Mastering Benedict: Monastic Rules and their Authors in the Early Medieval West', *EHR*, 416 (1990), 567–83. Many scholars have, however, remained unmoved: see Adalbert de Vogüé, 'The Master and Benedict: A Reply', *EHR*, 418 (1992), 95–103 (with a response from Dunn, 'The Master and Benedict: A Rejoinder', *ibid.*, pp. 104–11); Mayke de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden, 1996), p. 24; Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 103 and n. 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti*, c. 64.

<sup>16</sup> Guy Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries: Notes for the History of Monasteries and Convents at Rome from the V through to the X Century*, Studi di Antichità Cristiana, 23 (Rome, 1957), pp. 379–402.

<sup>17</sup> Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 131–32.

<sup>18</sup> (Pseudo-)Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*; the 'Life of Benedict' is *Dialogi*, II, in SC, 260, pp. 120–249; Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 131–87. The authenticity of the *Dialogi* has been vigorously challenged by Francis Clark, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1987), recently restated in his 'Searching for St Benedict in the Legacy of St Gregory the Great', *Peritia*, 17–18 (2004), 110–20. Further doubt has been cast by Marilyn Dunn, 'Gregory the Great, the Vision of Fursey, and the Origins of Purgatory', *Peritia*, 14 (2000), 238–54. Both argue for a forger in the 670s, Clark's in Rome, Dunn's in Northumbria. Both sets of arguments have their weaknesses but are sufficiently compelling at least to doubt Gregory's direct hand in the text. For responses to Clark, see Adalbert de Vogüé, 'Les Dialogues, oeuvre authentique et publiée par Grégoire lui-même', in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, ed. by Vittorino Grossi (Rome, 1991), II, 27–40 and Paul Meyvaert, 'The Enigma of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*: A Response to Francis Clark', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 39 (1988), 335–81.

<sup>19</sup> Joachim Wollasch, 'Benedictus abbas Romensis: Das römische Element der benediktinischen Tradition', in *Tradition als historische Kraft*, ed. by Norbert Kamp and Joachim Wollasch (Berlin,

more common throughout Europe were *regulae mixtae* ('mixed Rules'). Like Benedict's Rule itself, abbots (or, perhaps more often, a monastery's founder) would compile their own *regulae* based upon different practices they encountered, read about, or just considered practical. Across Europe, therefore, monastic living was governed by a variety of localized practices and observances. The most popular form of the *regula mixta* was that of the Irishman Columbanus, which was disseminated with great success from the monasteries of Luxeuil in Burgundy and Bobbio in Northern Italy with the help of the Merovingian court and thence to England.<sup>20</sup> The Rule was often known as the *Regula sancti Benedicti vel sancti Columbani* in the Merovingian kingdoms, neatly showing how Columbanus had taken Benedict's blueprint and modified it according to his own monastic ideals. In the case of Columbanus, these ideals created what Hugh Lawrence described as 'an ascetic regime so harsh and uncompromising that [it] chill[s] the blood'.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the success of Columbanus's 'regula mixta' brought the North an acquaintance with Benedict's precepts.

Early Frankish interest in Benedict's ideals took various forms. The earliest general decree that monks should take account of Benedict's *Regula* was made late in the seventh century at a council associated with Bishop Leudegar of Autun.<sup>22</sup> Sometime between 690 and 707 interest was heightened by the theft of Benedict's bodily relics from Monte Cassino by some monks of Fleury.<sup>23</sup> Attempts to reclaim the relics, notably by Pope Zacharias in about 750, largely fell on deaf ears, although Adrevald of Fleury in the mid-ninth century felt moved to write in defence

1982), pp. 119–37; Kassius Hallinger, 'Developments in the Cult and Devotion to St Benedict', *American Benedictine Review*, 36 (1985), 195–214; Marios Costambeys, 'The Transmission of Tradition: Gregorian Influence and Innovation in Eighth-Century Italian Monasticism', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 78–101.

<sup>20</sup> *Regula coenobialis*, ed. by G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, 2 (Dublin, 1970), pp. 142–69. The best account of the rise of Columbanian monasticism is Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 121–51. See also the essays in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. by Clarke and Brennan, and *Columbanus*, ed. by Lapidge.

<sup>21</sup> Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 43. Jane Stevenson, 'Monastic Rules of Columbanus', has explained the severity of the Rule in terms of Columbanus's attempts to preserve his own standards of monasticism.

<sup>22</sup> The association with Leudegar may simply be a product of the martyr's fame: Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 219, n. 96.

<sup>23</sup> On the competing traditions about what had happened, see Paul Meyvaert, 'Peter the Deacon and the Tomb of St Benedict', *Revue bénédictine*, 65 (1955), 3–70; Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 146–47. The earliest extant account of the theft is Paul the Deacon, *Historia langobardorum*, VI. 2.

of the theft.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the presence of the relics, Charlemagne himself sought a supposedly autograph copy of the *Regula s. Benedicti* from Monte Cassino.<sup>25</sup> Modern historians have argued that this 'pure' version of the *Regula* was the exemplar for the early ninth-century manuscript, St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 914, which may have played a role in later reforms.<sup>26</sup> Drives for purity in the Frankish Church meant that both the relics of Benedict and the idea of a purer version of his rule written, as Paul the Deacon would have it, in Benedict's own hand became popular rallying points for improved monastic discipline in the seventh and eighth centuries.

In England, monasticism was closely connected with the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. Gregory entrusted the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to monks led by Augustine.<sup>27</sup> Regardless of his interest in St Benedict, it is unlikely the Pope envisaged Benedict's would be the only *regula* of use in Britain. He actively encouraged Augustine to adopt practices from Gaul that the monk thought beneficial to the religious life amongst the English, making innovation and cultural cross-fertilization an important part of the mission.<sup>28</sup> The *Regula s. Benedicti* became more important in some Anglo-Saxon centres as time progressed. Stephanus attributed the full introduction of the *regula* to St Wilfrid, who established it as the basis of monastic life at Ripon.<sup>29</sup> It was, Stephanus claimed, a sign of Wilfrid's *romanitas*. The oldest surviving full copy of the Rule (albeit in the interpolated version) is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton MS 48, which comes from further south,

<sup>24</sup> *Epistolae aevi Merovingici collectae*, ed. by Wilhelm Gundlach, MGH Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1892), no. 18. On Adrevald, see Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 146–49.

<sup>25</sup> Theodemar of Monte Cassino, *Epistolae variorum Carolo Magno regnante scriptae*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), no. 13. The autograph was said by Paul the Deacon to have been kept safe in Rome after Monte Cassino's destruction in 577 until the monastery's refoundation under Abbot Petronax in the eighth century, on which see below, pp. 187–89.

<sup>26</sup> For a summary of debate concerning the manuscript, see McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians*, pp. 119–21. The manuscript is available in digital facsimile at <<http://www.cesg.unifr.ch>>. On the later reforms, see below, pp. 192–95.

<sup>27</sup> Bede, *HE*, I. 23.

<sup>28</sup> Bede, *HE*, I. 27; Meyvaert, 'Diversity within Unity'; Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, p. 148. See now also Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 48–66.

<sup>29</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, c. 14; David H. Farmer, 'St Wilfrid', in *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham*, ed. by D. P. Kirby (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1974), pp. 35–59 at pp. 44 and 46. It is unlikely that Wilfrid's influence at Ripon was continuous or strong enough to impose the *Regula s. Benedicti* to the exclusion of other *regulae*, nor is it clear that Wilfrid would have wanted to if it meant losing control of abbatial elections: Farmer, 'St Wilfrid', p. 57; van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried', pp. 370–75.

possibly from Bath or Worcester in c. 700.<sup>30</sup> It is, however, more than likely that even that merely supplied the Benedictine ingredients of a mixed House rule.<sup>31</sup> In Northumbria, too, the *Vita Cuthberti* and Bede's *Historia abbatum* attest to mixed Rules derived from the *Regula* being followed at Lindisfarne and Wearmouth-Jarrow respectively.<sup>32</sup> Contacts between England and the continent might even suggest that Benedictine influences spread from Columbanian monastic houses rather than directly from Rome.<sup>33</sup> The *Regula s. Benedicti* therefore had an important place in early Anglo-Saxon monasticism, but by no means an exclusive one.

### *Willibrord, Alcuin, and Irish Monasticism*

As a 'trailblazing' Anglo-Saxon, Willibrord's encounters with forms of the Frankish monastic life added a new dimension to the situation on the ground. He was not, however, the first Anglo-Saxon to engage with Frankish monasteries. Bede noted that houses like Brie and Chelles were already popular destinations for religious women of noble birth in the early seventh century.<sup>34</sup> Nor does it seem that Willibrord brought a clearly distinguishable Anglo-Saxon or Irish heritage with him, as we saw in Chapter 1. The question of the kind of monastic life Willibrord envisaged for Echternach is best pursued through the charter evidence. Arnold Angenendt argued that Pippin and Plectrudis's involvement in Echternach, particularly taking it under their direct protection, set the tone for Charlemagne's

<sup>30</sup> Bath is suggested by Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 117–18; Worcester is suggested by Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Venerable Bede, the Rule of St Benedict and Social Class*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1977), p. 8. On the manuscript in the wider manuscript tradition, see *Regula s. Benedicti*, ed. by de Vogüé and Neufville, SC, 181, pp. 338–40. A full facsimile can be found in *The Rule of Benedict: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 48*, ed. by David H. Farmer, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, 15 (Copenhagen, 1968).

<sup>31</sup> Patrick Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. by Bonner, pp. 141–69 (pp. 145–46); Mayr-Harting, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 7; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 117–18; Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, pp. 193–94.

<sup>32</sup> *Vita Cuthberti auctore anonymae*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave, *Two Lives of St Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge, 1940), III. 1; Bede, *Historia abbatum*, c. 11. See Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, pp. 154, 157, 162, and Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', pp. 141–43.

<sup>33</sup> Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', pp. 145–46; Mayr-Harting, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 6; Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 52–55.

<sup>34</sup> Bede, *HE*, III. 8.

later *Klosterpolitik*, establishing a political context for spiritual isolation.<sup>35</sup> Beyond the political implications of Willibrord's monastic life, however, it is unclear what the precise form of life was to be. Pippin and Plectrudis insisted that Willibrord was to govern the *vita sancta et regulari* following the saintly ordered life.<sup>36</sup> The monks were expected to include 'fratres peregrini et alii Deum timentes'. Willibrord also secured from his patrons the right of the brethren to elect their own abbots.<sup>37</sup> The net result was that Echternach was an independent foundation in the Merovingian tradition, free of episcopal interference, and yet at the same time its political affinity placed it within the familial nexus from which would develop later reforms.<sup>38</sup> 'The Northumbrian himself was partially responsible for creating certain conditions which the reformers strove to correct.'<sup>39</sup>

Separating out the charters and historical narratives adds different connotations to Willibrord's alleged monastic interests. Bede, for his part, never says anything about Willibrord's monasticism except by implication, associating him with the circle of Ecgbert. The absence of any reference to Echternach, compared to a distinct emphasis on Utrecht, perhaps shows Bede's interest in the missionary side of his countryman's career.<sup>40</sup> Alcuin wrote for an audience at Echternach so one might expect some attempt at illustrating the relative merits of different kinds of monasticism. He did write that Willibrord had left Ripon for Ireland to pursue a *vita ardore* ('more rigorous lifestyle'), and much has been made of this as an illustration of the attraction of stricter Irish monasticism.<sup>41</sup> Yet Alcuin's emphasis is narrower in focus than this implies. The 'rigour' Willibrord was attracted to in the *Vita Willibrordi* was the opportunity to engage in study 'quia in Hibernia scolasticam eruditionem viguisse audivit'.<sup>42</sup> Nothing further is said about Irish

<sup>35</sup> Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', p. 76.

<sup>36</sup> *Echternach*, nos 14–15, 24.

<sup>37</sup> *Echternach*, no. 15: 'wandering monks and others fearing God'.

<sup>38</sup> Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Kaolinger', pp. 91–94.

<sup>39</sup> Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Kaolinger', p. 82: 'Ja, der Northumbrier hat selber zu einem Teil jene Zustände mitverursacht, deren Korrektur die Reformer anstreben.'

<sup>40</sup> Compare Arnold Angenendt, "'Er war der erste . . .': Willibrords historische Stellung', in *Willibrord*, ed. by Bange and Weiler, pp. 18–19, and Jean Schroeder, 'Willibrord – Erzbischof von Utrecht oder Abt von Echternach? Das Leben und Wirken des angelsächsischen Missionars aus der Sicht der frühmittelalterlichen Hagiographie', in *ibid.*, pp. 348–57 (p. 352).

<sup>41</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 4; Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, p. 85, and van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried', pp. 385–84.

<sup>42</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 4: 'because he had heard that scholastic erudition flourished in Ireland'. On England and the attraction of Irish learning, see in particular Kathleen Hughes, 'Evidence for

monasticism. The description of Willibrord's attraction to monastic houses fits neatly with Alcuin's love of learning and — if Charlemagne's letter is to be believed — a relatively unorthodox perception of canonical living by Frankish standards.<sup>43</sup> Even the *Vita Alcuini* written in Ferrières did not attempt to disguise Alcuin's un-Benedictine vows and attitudes.<sup>44</sup> Alcuin did not suggest that Willibrord's experiences of any monasticism were important to the later foundation and discipline of Echternach, and indeed he barely mentions monastic life or Echternach in either version of the *Vita Willibrordi*. Willibrord's work and miracles revolved around a variety of secular and religious figures.

### *Boniface, Willibald, and Wessex*

The priest Willibald, author of the *Vita Bonifatii*, appeared to envisage as wide an audience as possible for his work, in contrast to the limited monastic address of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*. In doing so, however, he was more explicit about monastic order.<sup>45</sup> He claimed, for example, that Boniface was accepted as an oblate only after the abbot had consulted his community — something more in keeping with Columbanian than Benedictine monasticism<sup>46</sup> — but also states that life at Nursling was lived 'secundum praefinitam beati patris Benedicti rectae constitutionis formam'.<sup>47</sup> Boniface certainly promoted the *Regula s. Benedicti* later in his life, and like Leudegar, he made it a central tenet of Carloman's reforms at the 742 *Concilium Germanicum* and at Pippin's sister council at Les Estinnes the following year.<sup>48</sup> These reforms were also continued by Chrodegang of Metz after Boniface's

Contacts between the Churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age', in *England Before the Conquest*, ed. by Clemoes and Hughes, pp. 49–67, and Campbell, 'Debt of the Early English Church'. Campbell warned that it is, however, difficult to assess precisely what influence Irish learning had on the Anglo-Saxons (ibid., esp. at pp. 341, 343).

<sup>43</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 247. On some of Alcuin's intellectual interests, see Bullough, *Alcuin*.

<sup>44</sup> *Vita Alcuini*, cc. 5, 11, 27; Bullough, *Alcuin*, pp. 165–66.

<sup>45</sup> For a survey of influences in the *Vita Bonifatii*, see Staab, 'Bonifatius'.

<sup>46</sup> Holdsworth, 'Saint Boniface the Monk', pp. 55–56. On early medieval child oblation, including discussion of Boniface, see de Jong, *In Samuel's Image*.

<sup>47</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 2: 'according to the prescribed shape of the regulated law of the blessed father Benedict'.

<sup>48</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 56. Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 210; Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeiten im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), p. 52; de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism', pp. 629–30.



death, making them a current as well as a past concern for Willibald when he was writing the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>49</sup> The *Regula canonicorum*, which was written for the clergy of Metz rather than monks specifically, still used the *Regula s. Benedicti* as a model of order for the whole Christian Church including the laity.<sup>50</sup> But whether Boniface always followed that Rule alone or a mixed Rule has been the subject of some debate. Despite Wilhelm Levison's confident assertion that Boniface was 'trained in the spirit of St Benedict' in the monasteries of his youth,<sup>51</sup> Christopher Holdsworth has convincingly shown that the *Vita Bonifatii* illustrates what was at best a 'mixed Rule', combining a number of different customs.<sup>52</sup> C. H. Talbot fairly described the phrase about St Benedict in the *Vita Bonifatii* as 'a remarkable circumlocution that probably means that Boniface particularly liked some aspects of Benedict's Rule, not that he lived in a monastery particularly governed by that Rule'.<sup>53</sup> It is therefore impossible to ascertain whether Boniface left Britain with anything more than a passing acquaintance with the *Regula s. Benedicti* or if it is something he came to acquire. What the passage does illustrate, however, is that Boniface was portrayed as a saint grounded in the principles he himself had wished others to follow in the 740s and which people like Chrodegang continued to develop in the 750s and 760s.

The early continental monastic life of the Bonifatian foundations are also described in oblique terms in the early hagiography. Willibald wrote that Amöneburg, Boniface's first foundation, was established simply so that the word of faith could be followed.<sup>54</sup> Little more is said about Ohrdruf, which is described simply

<sup>49</sup> On the overlap between the reforms of Boniface and Chrodegang, see Claussen, *Reform of the Frankish Church*, pp. 45–55; Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1456–63; Eugen Ewig, 'Beobachtungen zur Entwicklung der fränkischen Reichskirche unter Chrodegang von Metz', in his *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien: Gesammelte Schriften (1952–73)*, ed. by Hartmut Atsma, Beihefte der Francia, 3/2 (Sigmaringen, 1979), pp. 220–31 (pp. 225–28); Ewig, 'Saint Chrodegang et la réforme de l'église franque', in *ibid.*, pp. 232–59 (pp. 238–40).

<sup>50</sup> On Chrodegang and the *Regula s. Benedicti*, see Claussen, *Reform of the Frankish Church*, pp. 114–65.

<sup>51</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 71.

<sup>52</sup> Holdsworth, 'Saint Boniface the Monk', pp. 54–57.

<sup>53</sup> *The Life of Saint Boniface*, trans. by C. H. Talbot, in *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Thomas F. X. Noble and Thomas Head (London, 1995), p. 114, n. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 5: 'Qui etiam, statim proficiscens pervenit et locum, cui nomen inscribitur Amanaburch, iuxta apostolum "enutritus verbis fidei et bonae doctrinae, quam adsecutus est"' (1 Tim. 4. 6).



as a place for work.<sup>55</sup> The two monasteries probably followed a mixed rule and played strategic roles in the expansion of Carolingian authority, but all that can be said from the *Vita Bonifatii* is that they were important simply because Boniface founded them.<sup>56</sup> Insofar as Amöneburg and Ohrdruf reflect Boniface's sanctity, it is as a founder of monasteries rather than as a man imbued with any particular commitment to monastic *regulae*. Far more is known about Fritzlar because of a letter Boniface wrote reordering the monastery on the death of Wigbert I, its first abbot, and a *Vita Wigberti* that was written about that abbot.<sup>57</sup> Friedrich Prinz argued that, as a forerunner of Boniface's Benedictine foundation at Fulda, Fritzlar was probably also governed by the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>58</sup> Yet nowhere is this made explicit, and Semmler has instead characterized the image of Fritzlar as having a fluid *regula mixta*.<sup>59</sup> The *Vita Wigberti* simply says that Wigbert was consecrated abbot 'in order that the monastery might follow religious norms' and that Megingoz, the future Bishop of Würzburg, had had to coerce the Fritzlar brethren into following the correct lifestyle.<sup>60</sup> As with Amöneburg and Ohrdruf, no claim about monastic rules is made except to emphasize the importance of Boniface as the founder.

### *Images of Monastic Regulae in Bavaria*

The closest connection between the Anglo-Saxons in Germany and the *Regula s. Benedicti* can be seen in the career of Willibald, who spent ten years following the Rule at Monte Cassino between 730 and 740.<sup>61</sup> The monastery was not, however, portrayed as a particularly thriving centre by Hygeburg: Willibald is said to have

<sup>55</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6: 'constructum est in loco quae dicitur Orthorpf, qui propriis sibi more apostolico minibus victum vestitum que instanter laborando adquesierunt'.

<sup>56</sup> Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, p. 238; Semmler, '*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*', pp. 80–81.

<sup>57</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 40; Lupus, *VWig*.

<sup>58</sup> Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 236–37 and p. 248, n. 389. See also de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism', pp. 623–24.

<sup>59</sup> Semmler, '*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*', pp. 82–83.

<sup>60</sup> Lupus, *VWig*, c. 5: 'Wigbertum sacerdotem secundi ordinis cenobio suo, cui nomen est gentili Germanorum lingua Friteslar, magistrum prefecit, uti monasticae illic religionis [. . .] componeret. Ibi cum Megingozo [. . .] diu conversatus est, et laxam antehac et fluidam fratrum conversationem ad normam suae vitae coercuit, quae procul dubio Sanctarum Scripturarum regebatur auctoritate.'

<sup>61</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 103.

found ‘only a few monks there’.<sup>62</sup> In fact Monte Cassino had just begun a period of revitalization under Abbot Petronax and the influence of Pope Gregory II, rebuilding the monastery properly for the first time since 577.<sup>63</sup> Willibald ‘learned much from their careful teaching’, but in turn he was said to have taught them ‘what was the real spirit of their institute’ by following the Rule carefully.<sup>64</sup> Hygeburg puts great emphasis on how Willibald’s ten years in the monastery imbued the saint with a firm understanding of the observances of Benedict’s Rule. The different positions Willibald held are recalled, as Hygeburg outlined how he moved from being a sacristan of the church in his first year to finally leading visitors ‘in the traditional path of monastic life’.<sup>65</sup> A two-way process is described in these passages: Willibald’s monastic discipline was strengthened by his connection with Saint Benedict’s own monastery, while Willibald himself reinvigorated the following of the Rule itself. The saint’s relationship with a place of spiritual importance is significant to Hygeburg’s interpretation of Willibald as a saintly figure, but in turn Willibald came to embody the virtues associated with that place.

The story of Willibald’s years in Monte Cassino set the scene for Hygeburg to portray the saint as a holy man once he reached Bavaria.<sup>66</sup> After Willibald had journeyed to Germany at the request of Boniface, he was consecrated as a bishop. He then established the monastery of Eichstätt, which became the focal point for Willibald’s episcopal and monastic work.<sup>67</sup> His pious example, in the model of a holy man, attracted many to the faith and encouraged Christian discipline. It is clear that Willibald was here credited with bringing the true spirit of Christianity to Bavaria, supplementing the pre-existing episcopal organization. At the heart of this new, vigorous

<sup>62</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5: ‘non repperiebant ibi nisi paucos monachos’.

<sup>63</sup> Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, VI. 4. Wollasch, ‘Benedictus abbas Romensis’, pp. 126–30.

<sup>64</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5: ‘Statimque illi magna mentis moderamine et dogmatum ingenio felicem fratrem contuberniam sedulis disputationum admonitiis, non solum verbis, sed morum venustatis visitando docebat et recte constitutionis formam et cenobialis vitae normam in semet ipso ostendendo prebebat, ita ut omnium amorem seu timorem in ipsum provocando arcessivit.’ See Semmler, ‘*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*’, p. 84.

<sup>65</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5: ‘alios cum illo in veneranda regularis vitae vestigial preibando perducebat’.

<sup>66</sup> The classic exposition of the role of a holy man in a community remains Brown’s ‘Rise and Function of the Holy Man’. See also his later thoughts: ‘The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity’, *Representations*, 1 (1983), 1–25.

<sup>67</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 6; Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 253–54.

Christianity was, of course, the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>68</sup> Through the observance of the Rule, Willibald's community was able to turn the 'wilderness' of Eichstätt into a well-cultivated site with riches akin to nectar and honey; Hygeburg's audience was to be left in no doubt as to the power and impact of Willibald's ascetic living.<sup>69</sup>

It is clear that, despite what Hygeburg wrote, the *Regula s. Benedicti* was again only one part of the monastic rule at Eichstätt.<sup>70</sup> The simple fact that Willibald was a bishop of a monastery may suggest insular influences.<sup>71</sup> The close connection between monks and clerics threatened the eremitical qualities of the *Regula s. Benedicti* by bringing monks into the world. This does not appear to have been a concern for Hygeburg; she wrote that Wynnebald, despite having left Mainz for Heidenheim in search of a more rigorous monastic life, still spent time preaching in Bavaria because of the residual paganism in the region.<sup>72</sup> The *regula mixta* of the *institutia sancti Bonifatii* is perhaps evident alongside the practical problems of living the holy life in the world.<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless Monte Cassino was again emphasized as the institutional and spiritual beacon for the Anglo-Saxons' monasticism around Eichstätt when Hygeburg recounted how Wynnebald wished to see out his days at the Italian monastery.<sup>74</sup> It is almost as if Monte Cassino (and St Benedict) did not so much represent the authority and orthodoxy of Benedictine monasticism alone,

<sup>68</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 6: 'et in loco que dicitur Eihstat monasterium construere incipiebat atque oceo ibidem sacram monasterialis vitae disciplinam in usum prioris vitae, quod videndo ad Sanctum Benedictum'. See Engels, 'Die Vita Willibaldi', pp. 182–83.

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter 4 above, p. 152.

<sup>70</sup> Engels, 'Die Vita Willibaldi', pp. 192–95.

<sup>71</sup> This has been the argument of Arnold Angenendt, 'Willibald zwischen Mönchtum und Bischofsamt', in *Der heilige Willibald*, ed. by Dickerhof, Reiter, and Weinfurter, pp. 143–70 (pp. 156–60). On monastic bishops, see de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism', pp. 627–28. The idea of Irish monastic bishops is problematical, and the differences between the structure of the Irish and continental Churches is often exaggerated: see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 241–64. On the practical issue of few Irish metropolitan centres, see Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, pp. 57–102. Willibald's position too could have been a matter of pragmatism if he was, as Andreas Bigelmair suggested ('Die Gründung der mitteldeutschen Bistümer', pp. 281–82), simply unable to take up a position as Bishop of Erfurt. Nonetheless his position as bishop of a monastery was certainly not entirely orthodox.

<sup>72</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 7.

<sup>73</sup> Semmler, '*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*', pp. 85–87. Brown, 'Saint as Exemplar', p. 21.

<sup>74</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 8: 'Cumque mens iam in eo devotus et multo agilior quam corpus proferre poterat, magna mente devotione cupiebat, ut ad Sanctum Benedictum pergeret et ibi vitam finiret.'

but also the *regula mixta* which had grown up around the *Regula s. Benedicti*. It provided an institutional authority to a collection of practices that were otherwise personal to the abbots and other religious figures who established them — a timeless symbol of monastic ideals standing in contrast to the temporality and fragility of human lives. Figures like Willibald and Wynnebald were important in Hygeburg's *vitae* because of their example, but they were not the most important people in their world as they stood alongside figures like Boniface, Pope Gregory III, and Abbot Petronax; their association with places like Monte Cassino and Rome, however, helped give weight to the ideas they had come to represent in the *vitae*.

There is an earlier Bavarian *vita* that claims that the *Regula s. Benedicti* was already followed in the region before Willibald's time: Arbeo of Freising's *Vita Corbiniani*. The work has been demonstrated to have been written as a reply to claims in the *Vita Bonifatii* about Boniface's impact on the Bavarian Church.<sup>75</sup> In part Arbeo's motivation was probably related to the fact that he belonged to the same circles as Virgil of Salzburg, Boniface's sometime opponent, for whom Arbeo wrote the work.<sup>76</sup> Despite the apparent opposition to the memory of Boniface, it would appear that Arbeo's *vitae* — he also wrote a saint's Life about Emmeram of Freising — renegotiated the significance of Boniface's work rather than denied that he did anything in Bavaria. Direct denial would have been impossible: Boniface, as a martyr, was still an important part of the Germanic Christian world whether Arbeo fully believed his achievements or not, and the saint was also venerated by the Carolingian family, to whom Arbeo was sympathetic.<sup>77</sup>

Everything that is known about Corbinian is derived from Arbeo's *vita*, making it difficult to assess for its truth values and to disassociate what is 'known' of Corbinian's career from the shadow of Boniface. He came from the region of Melun and allegedly worked simultaneously with Pippin II and Gregory II even though this is impossible.<sup>78</sup> In Bavaria his significance was first as a holy man who from time to

<sup>75</sup> Ian Wood, 'Missionary Hagiography in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries', in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung*, ed. by Brunner and Merta, pp. 189–99 (pp. 191–93); Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 307–09; Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 157–58.

<sup>76</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRG, 16 (Hannover, 1920), pref. On the disputes between Boniface and Virgil, see Löwe, 'Ein literarischer Widersacher des Bonifatius'; Ó'Neill, 'Bonifaz und Virgil'.

<sup>77</sup> On Arbeo's political sympathies, see Jahn, 'Bischof Arbeo von Freising'; Airlie, 'Narratives of Triumph', pp. 102–03.

<sup>78</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, cc. 1, 7, 10. The story that Pippin II countenanced Corbinian's visit to Gregory II is unlikely, given that Pippin died in 714 and Gregory only became Pope in 715 (Krusch, MGH SRG, 16, p. 195, n. 4).

time advised leading figures in the region, and later because his body was housed at Mais, then Passau, and finally at Freising.<sup>79</sup> This final translation had been undertaken under the aegis of Arbeo himself, so his claims about the saint would have had direct bearing on his own diocese even though it was written for Virgil.

Arbeo presented Corbinian as a man who followed the *Regula s. Benedicti*. This was achieved primarily through a series of verbal borrowings from both the *Regula* and Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*. In Chapter 3 of the *Vita Corbiniani*, which details Corbinian's ascetic early life in *Castro*, the influence of Benedict is apparent in references to monastic cells and silent study.<sup>80</sup> The following chapter also contains echoes of the Rule in a passage relating how a thief had stolen Corbinian's mule only for it to have been returned to the man of God.<sup>81</sup> Later Corbinian visited Gregory II in order to obtain permission to continue his pursuit of an ascetic life, which again was explained with direct quotation from the Rule.<sup>82</sup> Corbinian then preached in Bavaria for a time, and his successes were again described with reference to the Rule.<sup>83</sup> The ideas of Benedictine monasticism were therefore an integral part of Arbeo's portrayal of Corbinian's spirituality and, consequently, his nature as a saint.

The image of a Benedictine saint would have had particular resonance for any Anglo-Saxon readers, or even those aware of Anglo-Saxon monasticism on the continent in the eighth century. As Ian Wood has argued recently, Arbeo 'might be seen as deliberately placing the saint within the monastic tradition which the English in general and Boniface in particular were popularising'.<sup>84</sup> Given the context in which Arbeo was writing, this is almost certainly possible. The 'English in general' might have included Willibald: the Anglo-Saxon was active in the region right up to his death in 787 and, as we saw in Chapter 1, Virgil had included a 'Uilpald ep[iscopu]s' in his *Necrologica*.<sup>85</sup> The portrayal of Corbinian's activities earlier in the century would almost certainly have been as much a challenge to Willibald as a holy man to Bavaria as it would have been to Boniface as an episcopal organizer. One might

<sup>79</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, c. 41.

<sup>80</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, c. 3, which echoes *Regula s. Benedicti*, c. 31 and c. 42.

<sup>81</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, c. 4, echoing *Regula s. Benedicti*, c. 46.

<sup>82</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, c. 7, quoting *Regula s. Benedicti*, c. 48.

<sup>83</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, c. 14: 'Tunc beatus vir Dei venerabatur ab omnibus maxime vero a domesticis fidei.' This echoes *Regula s. Benedicti*, c. 53: 'omnibus congruus honor exhibeatur maxime domesticis fidei et peregrinis' (see Krusch, MGH SRG, 16, p. 201, n. 5).

<sup>84</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 158.

<sup>85</sup> *Monumenta necrologica monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis*, p. 26.

therefore begin to see Hygeburg's writings in part as a reply to Arbeo's *vita*. By describing Bavaria as a semi-Christian wilderness, Hygeburg was by implication challenging the historical significance of figures like Corbinian who, the Anglo-Saxons clearly thought, had not done enough to Christianize the region properly.

### *Benedict of Aniane and the Carolingian Promotion of the Regula s. Benedicti*

The eighth century saw two phases of monastic reform under Boniface and Chrodegang, but by the early ninth century there was already renewed impetus for reform led by Emperor Louis the Pious and Benedict of Aniane.<sup>86</sup> This third period of reform changed the ways in which the Anglo-Saxon missions were perceived. For some groups, the times of Boniface were crucial to the establishment of Benedictine monasticism, and it is notable that many of our *vitae* date from the *anianischen* reform years or shortly thereafter. For others — including Benedict — reform meant a whole new start. There was no division in attitudes to the missionary past along any party lines, just as there was still little uniformity among the reformed monasteries in their attitudes to the *Regula s. Benedicti* itself.<sup>87</sup> Benedict himself was from a noble family of Gothia, far removed from the Rhineland world which has concerned us so far.<sup>88</sup> He forsook his name Witiza in favour of 'Benedict' to affirm his commitment to Benedictine monasticism.<sup>89</sup> Thereafter he was Louis the Pious's chief religious advisor from 814 to 821, promulgating his ideas on monasticism by imperial decree after councils at Aachen in 816 and 817.<sup>90</sup> A

<sup>86</sup> On Benedict of Aniane, see Semmler, 'Benedictus II'; de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism', pp. 630–34; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, pp. 73–78. There exists no comprehensive study of the impact of the *anianischen* reform, but see Josef Semmler, 'Studien zum *Supplex libellus* und zur anianischen Reform in Fulda', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 69 (1958), 268–98; Semmler, 'Corvey und Herford in der benediktinischen Reformbewegung des 9. Jahrhunderts', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 4 (1970), 289–319; Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus'; Dieter Geuenich, 'Kritische Anmerkungen zur sogenannten "annianischen Reform"', in *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft, 750–1000*, ed. by Bauer and others, pp. 99–112.

<sup>87</sup> Semmler, 'Benedictus II', pp. 28–47, and, more critically, Geuenich, 'Kritische Anmerkungen'.

<sup>88</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti abbatis Anianensis et Indensis*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), c. 1.

<sup>89</sup> See now Lifshitz, *Name of the Saint*, esp. pp. 2–3.

<sup>90</sup> *Institutio canoniorum Aquisgranensis*, ed. by Albert Werminghoff, MGH Conc., 2. 1 (Hannover, 1906); *Institutio sanctimonialium Aquisgranensis*, ed. by Albert Werminghoff, MGH

*vita* was written about Benedict to celebrate his achievements by Ardo, one of the monks at Benedict's own monastery of Aniane during the ninth century.

Ardo's account of Benedict's life describes a journey through different modes of ascetic living. When he first became a monk, Ardo wrote, Benedict lived an extreme ascetic lifestyle at St Seine in Dijon. For two years and six months Benedict fasted, 'sic quippe carni suae acsi cruentae bestiae erat infestus'.<sup>91</sup> This Benedict continued to do until 'pallebant ora ieiuniis, et macie exausta carne, pellis ossibus inherebat hac in modum pallearia bovum rugata pendeat'.<sup>92</sup> He refused to wash, which led to a colony of lice infesting his skin, and wore such raggedy clothes that even the other monks made fun of him.<sup>93</sup> Throughout this period Ardo presents Benedict atoning for his earlier secular life, purging his body in order to establish himself ready for the next stage of his life and the promotion of the *Regula s. Benedicti*. At this stage, however, Benedict is said to have followed the examples of the eastern ascetic Basil and the Rule of Pachomius, scorning the *Regula s. Benedicti* as being 'for beginners and weak persons'.<sup>94</sup> The *Regula s. Benedicti* may indeed have been for beginners, but this harsher evaluation of the Rule helped Ardo to establish Benedict of Aniane as a man whose holy discipline transcended the standards of the Rule he would go on to promote. Ardo did not, however, offer Benedict's early asceticism as an *exemplum pro imitatione* for others. When Benedict was divinely inspired to become an example of salvation to others, then he was 'inflamed with love of the *Regula s. Benedicti*' and committed it to memory. It was probably also at this time that he changed his name in order to symbolize his spiritual commitment to the Rule. Thus, although Benedict had learnt the Rule at St Seine, he had internalized it and become himself an *exemplum* of monastic living entirely distinct from any institutionalized monastic centre like Monte Cassino. Overall Ardo had illustrated part of Benedict of Aniane's sanctity through the ways in which he had

Conc., 2. 1 (Hannover, 1906). These two decrees were conflated to create the *Capitulare monasticum*, ed. by Alfred Boretius, MGH Cap., 1 (Hanover, 1883), pp. 343–49: see Josef Semmler, 'Zur Überlieferung der monastischen Gesetzgebung Ludwigs des Frommen', *Deutsches Archiv zur Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 16 (1960), 309–88.

<sup>91</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 2: 'endangering his flesh as if it were a bloodthirsty beast'.

<sup>92</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 2: 'his face grew gaunt with fasting, his flesh was exhausted by abstinence [and] his shrivelled skin hung from his bones like the dewlaps of cows'.

<sup>93</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 2.

<sup>94</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 2: 'Regulam quoque beati Benedicti tironibus seu informis positam fore contestans, ad beati Basilii dicta necnon et beati Pacomii regulam scabdere nitens, quamvis exiguis possibilia gereret, iugiter impossibilia rimabat.' Semmler, 'Benedictus II', pp. 5–7.



come to understand the nature of asceticism and ultimately embody the most appropriate form of monasticism for Ardo's community.

In Ardo's account of the spread of Benedict's influence, the promotion of the *Regula s. Benedicti* developed an institutional basis but it was firmly one of Benedict of Aniane's own creation. 'Non super alienum fundamentum aedificans,' Ardo claimed, Benedict 'sed novo opera construere domos coepit ignotamque salutis pandere curabit viam.'<sup>95</sup> Here, Ardo carefully omitted to mention the violent opposition Benedict had in fact faced in order to preserve the purity of his monastic movement.<sup>96</sup> People still looked to Benedict rather than his foundations for inspiration, but by creating new foundations himself he had established something that would live on after his death.<sup>97</sup> Halfway through the *Vita Benedicti* Ardo promoted the legal claim of the monastery of Aniane as the head of Benedict's monasteries, quoting a charter in which Charlemagne granted the monastery to Benedict in its entirety.<sup>98</sup> The purpose of the charter was to establish immunities that prevented subsequent outside interference in Aniane's affairs. In particular Aniane obtained the privilege that the monastery's brethren could choose their own abbots in accordance with the *Regula s. Benedicti*, so long as those abbots would themselves lead the community in the spirit of Benedict.<sup>99</sup> But Benedict of Aniane still transcended these moves: Louis the Pious set Benedict as the spiritual governor over all the Frankish monasteries, and then Benedict produced the *Concordia regularum* to clarify and improve upon the *Regula s. Benedicti* — achievements given spiritual importance by their inclusion in the *Vita Benedicti*.<sup>100</sup> Josef Semmler has shown that Benedict of Aniane was not, ultimately, successful in establishing a universal set of monastic observances across the Frankish Empire,<sup>101</sup> but this is not evident in the triumphalistic tone of Ardo's work.

<sup>95</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 3: 'Not building upon another's foundations, he began with new endeavour to erect houses as well as to expound the unknown new way of salvation.'

<sup>96</sup> Semmler, 'Benedictus II', p. 9.

<sup>97</sup> For example Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 6: 'Preterea surrexerunt in regione eadem vel circumquaque nonnulli viri religiosi hedificantes monasteria adgregantesque monachos seseque ad exemplum beati viri exercitantes.'

<sup>98</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 18. The practice of putting legal documents in the centre of hagiographical texts was a common way of promoting legal claims: see, for example, Rimbart, *VA*, c. 23; Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 126–27.

<sup>99</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 18.

<sup>100</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, cc. 36–38.

<sup>101</sup> Semmler, 'Benedictus II', pp. 28–47.

The image Ardo created of Benedict of Aniane presented the saint as an important source for the *Regula s. Benedicti*, who went on to found a new institutional basis for the observance of the Rule in the Frankish Empire in the form of new monasteries and texts. Earlier centres like Monte Cassino are notable for how little attention Ardo gives them, mentioning Benedict of Nursia's own monastery only once in passing.<sup>102</sup> Ardo was also scathing of the foundations of the Anglo-Saxons, writing that 'multa denique monasteria erant, quae quondam regulariter fuerant institute; sed paulatim tepescente rigore, regularis pene deperierat ordo'.<sup>103</sup> It is difficult not to see this as a comment on monasteries that Boniface had established which had followed the *Regula s. Benedicti*. The mood of Ardo's text is one of spiritual rebirth, with Benedict of Aniane's personal ascetic journey marking him out as a saint, and then the corresponding rebirth of Carolingian monasticism establishing that status within the context of institutionalized monasticism and the cult of saints.

### *Sanctity and Monastic Regulae at Fulda and Tauberbischofsheim*

#### **Authority and Rule at Fulda**

The monks of Fulda came to play a pivotal role in Benedict's campaign for reform, and in the process they were forced to re-evaluate the role of Boniface and his colleagues in their past. Some of the origins of the movement can be seen in the crises that beset Fulda during the abbacy of Ratgar (802–16), which resulted in Ratgar's deposition and the election of Eigil in accordance with Chapter 64 of the Rule of Benedict.<sup>104</sup> Harmony was restored to the monastery with the symbolic translation of Boniface's relics to the new church in 819.<sup>105</sup> In the midst of the trouble, Eigil wrote the *Vita Sturmi* to confront the present through the past.<sup>106</sup> Sturm, although

<sup>102</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 38: 'Quam ob causam quos peritos esse compererat adtente sciscitabatur circa longeque positos, eos etiam qui istis in partibus ad Montem Cassinum accederent, veluti qui nūc audita solummodo, set visa perciperent.'

<sup>103</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 36: 'many monasteries had once been established in the Rule, but little by little firmness had grown lax and regularity of the Rule had almost perished'.

<sup>104</sup> The election of Eigil was the first time an abbot appears to have been elected in a northern monastery in accordance with the Rule of Benedict: see Kassius Hallinger, 'Regula Benedicti 64 und die Wahlgewohnheiten des 6.–12. Jahrhunderts', *Wiener Studien*, 8 (1977), 109–30 (p. 117).

<sup>105</sup> Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*, pp. 38–39.

<sup>106</sup> The best work on Eigil's *VS* perhaps remains Pius Engelbert's introduction to his critical edition of the text, *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigil von Fulda: Literarkritisch-historische Untersuchung und*

not an Anglo-Saxon himself, had been educated at Fritzlar and was rated highly enough by Boniface to have been entrusted with the abbacy of Boniface's own flagship monastery at Fulda from its creation in 744.<sup>107</sup> Eigil was also Sturm's relative and pupil, so his text represents an attempt to shape a past he could engage with on both institutional and personal levels. The *Vita Sturmi* is thus an important source for both the Anglo-Saxons' monastic legacy and the ways in which it was perceived by a later reforming generation.

According to Eigil, while it was Sturm who effectively founded Fulda, it was Boniface who first endowed it with its monastic rule. There may be a case, as Karl Heinemeyer has argued, for seeing the foundation of Fulda as an integral part of Boniface's broader Church reforms.<sup>108</sup> At the *Concilium Germanicum* (742) Boniface decreed that 'abbates et monachi receperunt sancti patris Benedicti [regulam] ad restaurandam normam regularis vite'<sup>109</sup> — a measure repeated under Pippin III at Les Estinnes the following year. Given that a generation later there were concerns to obtain a purer version of the *Regula*, it is unclear precisely what version of this text Boniface intended. Eigil — writing of course after Charlemagne's *correctio* — did not wish to credit Boniface with any role in establishing a specifically Benedictine Rule at Fulda. He is even, on one minor point, slightly critical of Boniface's guidelines: Eigil claimed that Boniface had encouraged the monks to drink weak beer and no wine, a decision that was soon relaxed in the time of Pippin, to Eigil's approval.<sup>110</sup> The earliest land grants to Fulda after Boniface's death mostly consisted of vineyards, raising questions about the extent to which Sturm continued the Bonifatian interpretation of the religious life.<sup>111</sup> Josef Semmler preferred to describe Boniface's monastic standards using a phrase found in a later Fulda document that refers to an *institutia sancti Bonifatii*, which is characterized by a *regula mixta*.<sup>112</sup> There was, of course, no contradiction in Boniface promoting the *Regula s. Benedicti* but with

*Edition*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 29 (Marburg, 1968).

<sup>107</sup> On the foundation of Fulda, see above, pp. 148–51.

<sup>108</sup> Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', pp. 27–28.

<sup>109</sup> Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', pp. 30–31; *Die Briefe*, no. 56: 'abbots and monks should follow the rule of saintly father Benedict to restore norms to the regular life'.

<sup>110</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 13. On Boniface's decree about alcohol and how it did not fit with traditional Benedictine practices, see Semmler, '*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*', pp. 94–95.

<sup>111</sup> Staab, 'Bonifatius', p. 68.

<sup>112</sup> Semmler, '*Instituta sancti Bonifatii*'.

his own amendments since that had hitherto been the most common way to use Benedict's guidelines. Eigil's treatment of the question may, however, reveal more about the arrangements of his own time than in the early days of Fulda.

The Fulda monks suffered a profound crisis of leadership in the first two decades of the ninth century.<sup>113</sup> Fulda's community had been expanding rapidly, but in 806 it was rocked by an outbreak of plague which killed two-thirds of the brethren and forced many others, including Eigil and Hrabanus, to flee.<sup>114</sup> In 810 disorder ('conturbatio') at Fulda prompted twelve monks to petition Charlemagne against Ratgar, only for the Abbot to defend himself successfully; a subsequent complaint to Louis the Pious in 816, however, was more successful.<sup>115</sup> The monks set out their grievances with their own abbot, Ratgar, in an appeal to the Emperor known as the *Supplex libellus*.<sup>116</sup> These included failures to honour the saints properly (c. 3), to look after the sick (c. 5), or to pay proper hospitality to pilgrims (c. 13). The most famous abuse was Ratgar's apparently excessive pursuit of a building programme at the expense of proper religious observance (c. 12), which to the monks became symbolic of the wider problems involved.<sup>117</sup> Fundamentally, the problem came down to differing ideas of how a monastery should work, with personalities exacerbating problems already inherent in the reception of contrasting authorities.

Fulda's historiography is often a reflection of its attempts at crisis management. Ratgar clearly had some support within the community as well, and Brun Candidus's *Vita Aegil* (Fulda, 839x842), our principal source for the disputes, is notable for its careful and measured account of their resolution.<sup>118</sup> Petra Kehl has convincingly argued that we need to read Eigil's *Vita Sturmi* in relation to efforts to

<sup>113</sup> Stefan Patzold, 'Konflikte im Kloster Fulda zur Zeit der Karolinger', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter*, 76 (2000), 69–162.

<sup>114</sup> *Annales Laurissensis minores*, Codex Fuldensis, p. 120 (c. 39). For a facsimile of the Fulda manuscript which recounts these events, see Richard Corradini, *Die Wiener Handschrift Cvp 430\*: Ein Beitrag zur Historiographie in Fulda im frühen 9. Jahrhundert*, Fuldaer Hochschulschriften, 37 (Frankfurt-am-Main, 2000).

<sup>115</sup> *Annales Laurissensis minores*, p. 121 (c. 44) and p. 123 (c. 4).

<sup>116</sup> *Supplex libellus* = *Epistolae variorum Carolo Magno regnante scriptae*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), no. 33; Semmler, 'Studien zum *Supplex libellus*'.

<sup>117</sup> Brun Candidus, *Vita Aegil*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), c. 5; Patzold, 'Konflikte im Kloster Fulda', p. 116. Compare Semmler, 'Studien zum *Supplex libellus*', pp. 271–72, in which the building works are considered to be more central. For a substantial analysis of the building works at Fulda, see Raaijmakers, 'Sacred Time, Sacred Space', pp. 93–133.

<sup>118</sup> Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus', pp. 22–23.

resolve problems because of the parallels between Eigil's concerns and those in the *Supplex libellus*.<sup>119</sup> There is, in particular, a distinct interest in leadership common to the texts and, significantly, Sturm as the founder of monastic order in Fulda.<sup>120</sup> While the role of Boniface in the foundation is generally seen in a positive light, there is a tension between the ideals of the individual and the will of the community over the establishment of monastic discipline; the community may have agreed with Boniface 'by common consent' over weak beer, but they also changed their mind communally. The emphasis on the will of the community was both a distinctly Benedictine trait and an ideal promoted strongly in the *Vita Ægil* in the wake of the deposition of Ratgar. One might therefore detect in the *Vita Sturmi* an attempt to resolve Fulda's early past as Boniface's personal monastery with the growing Benedictine feeling aroused by opposition to Ratgar. Eigil perhaps showed that even a saint like Boniface had no authority to dictate to a monastic community if it meant exceeding temporal authority and contradicting the communal will.

Eigil's interest in the proper execution of the office of abbot extends into his account of a dispute between Sturm and Lull.<sup>121</sup> The dispute is only detailed here and may owe much to Eigil's perception of interfering bishops in his own day. Eigil claimed that Lull had sought control over Fulda upon succeeding Boniface as Bishop of Mainz. Normally bishops expected to have some kind of authority over their local monasteries because they formed integral parts of the Christian structure of their sees.<sup>122</sup> Fulda was different from most monasteries because Boniface had sought papal privileges for the monastery, in principle freeing it from any obligation to recognize outside authorities like unscrupulous bishops who might abuse its resources.<sup>123</sup> But the monastery could not easily maintain its separation from the outside world

<sup>119</sup> Petra Kehl, 'Die Entstehungszeit der Vita Sturmi des Eigil: Versuch einer Neudatierung', *Archiv für mittelhessische Kirchengeschichte*, 46 (1994), 11–20. Her arguments have not found much favour: see, for example, Brunert, 'Fulda als Kloster in eremo', p. 59, and von Padberg, 'Zum Sachsenbild', p. 176. On the traditional dating of the text, 796, see Engelbert, *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigil von Fulda*, pp. 18–20.

<sup>120</sup> Sturm is mentioned in the *Supplex libellus*, c. 1 and c. 10.

<sup>121</sup> Eigil, *VS*, cc. 17–22. On the dispute, see now Patzold, 'Konflikte im Kloster Fulda', pp. 75–91. That Boniface's death created a 'Machtvakuum' among his heirs (p. 88) is however less apparent than the wider context of 'Church reform': Palmer, "'Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull'.

<sup>122</sup> On the Sturm-Lull dispute as representative as a shift away from this situation, see de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism', pp. 624–25.

<sup>123</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, nos 86, 87, 89; Eigil, *VS*, c. 20. See Theo Kölzer, 'Bonifatius und Fulda: Rechtliche, diplomatische und kulturelle Aspekte', *AmKg*, 57 (2005), 25–53 (pp. 37–46).

given its many connections.<sup>124</sup> When Lull attempted to integrate Fulda into his diocese he faced resistance from Sturm and responded — according to Eigil — by bribing Pippin III to impose a certain Marcus as abbot in Sturm's place.<sup>125</sup> The collectiveness of the Fulda brethren's actions at this point in Eigil's narrative are striking: they are all forced to accept Marcus, they collectively agree this was a bad idea, they all dismiss him, and together they go to the court of Pippin to demand the return of Sturm as abbot (although in the interim they unanimously all appoint Prezzold as abbot).<sup>126</sup> In the acceptance and subsequent dismissal of Marcus, one might see a parallel with how the community was able to accept and then dismiss Boniface's views on alcohol: the important legitimizing factor was that the brethren acted together as a collective whole. There are also strong parallels with the dismissal of Ratgar in the *Vita Ægil* in terms of the emphasis on the communal will, echoing the *Regula s. Benedicti* on how the appointment of an abbot depended on the communal will.<sup>127</sup> The dispute between Sturm and Lull creates a lesson for the community about the correct relationship between an abbot and his brethren.

Eigil was particularly concerned with outside influences on Fulda in the course of the Sturm-Lull debate. There are problems, however, in that no other source indicates that any such dispute ever took place. When Brun Candidus came to write the *Vita Ægil* twenty years later there was no apparent ill-feeling at Fulda towards Lull, if ever there had been. Lull was remembered, for example, simply as the bishop who had consecrated Eigil as a priest.<sup>128</sup> Later traditions from Mainz

<sup>124</sup> Patzold, 'Konflikte im Kloster Fulda', pp. 154–57; Kölzer, 'Bonifatius und Fulda', pp. 45–46, with some reservations about Patzold's interpretation. The representation of Fulda divided between worldly and anchoritic parties given in Johannes Fried, 'Fulda in der Bildungs- und Geistesgeschichte des früheren Mittelalters', in *Kloster Fulda*, ed. by Schrimpf, pp. 3–38 (pp. 8–10), is too simplistic.

<sup>125</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 18; Palmer, "'Vigorous Life" of Bishop Lull', pp. 265–66. It is possible Pippin was also worried about Sturm because he was from Bavaria but there is no evidential ground for this assumption: see Patzold, 'Konflikte im Kloster Fulda', pp. 75–76.

<sup>126</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 18.

<sup>127</sup> For example the emphasis on the 'fratres' in Brun Candidus, *Vita Ægil*, cc. 3–8; Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus', p. 29.

<sup>128</sup> Brun Candidus, *Vita Ægil*, c. 2: 'ordinatur ab Lullo episcopo Mogonticensis ecclesiae presbyter, qui post sanctum Bonifacium magnum et electum Dei pontificum eius urbis episcopatum tenebat primus'. Schieffer, in 'Angelsachsen und Franken', p. 1524, noted that it was intriguing that the only person known to have been consecrated by Lull should have proceeded to show such ill will towards the man. Perhaps, though, the fact that we know this only from Brun Candidus suggests that under Hrabanus Maurus there were efforts afoot to create a new relationship between Fulda and Mainz.

and Fulda also sought to rehabilitate Lull's reputation and recast the 'ferocious' Sturm as the villain.<sup>129</sup> Caution may be urged in accepting *prima facie* that Lull was unscrupulously trying to control Fulda. Even in the *Vita Sturmi*, the Sturm-Lull episode appears to be constructed as a prelude to the proclamation that Pippin confirmed the papal privileges Boniface had obtained from Zacharias and the statement 'Quod privilegium, usque hodie in monasterio conservatum'.<sup>130</sup> Two letters amongst the *Collectio pontificia* collection recorded that Boniface had appealed to Zacharias for such a grant, using Lull as a messenger, and that Zacharias had agreed to the request.<sup>131</sup> The earliest collection of Boniface's letters from eighth-century Mainz contains the ending of such a privilege, but the beginning was on a folio that has been cut out.<sup>132</sup> The earliest surviving full version of the privilege is therefore in Fulda's earliest (ninth-century) copy of the letters, but this represents an interpolated tradition of the text, possibly dating from c. 810 and probably the version to which Eigil was referring.<sup>133</sup> Eigil's presentation of the Sturm-Lull dispute would seem to be designed to promote the freedoms of Fulda in the face of outside influences, rather than to criticize Lull per se; one must, however, consider what these outside influences might have been.

Fulda was useful to Charlemagne, who pursued a rigorous policy of binding East Frankish monasteries to his efforts to expand his authority further east, and into Saxony in particular.<sup>134</sup> This is reflected in charter evidence, such as Lull's 'gift' of his *Eigenkloster* of Hersfeld to Charlemagne in 775 in order to further the Saxon missions (as Lull remained abbot, Hersfeld's change of status was largely semantic).<sup>135</sup> Eigil perhaps welcomed Fulda's role in the Saxon missions, and presented

<sup>129</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull', pp. 267–68. *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, c. 10; Lampert of Hersfeld, *Vita Lulli*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SRG, 38 (Hannover, 1894), cc. 10–13.

<sup>130</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 20: 'the privilege just mentioned is preserved to this day in the monastery'.

<sup>131</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, nos 86–87.

<sup>132</sup> *Die Briefe*, ed. by Tangl, p. vi. Tangl reconstructed the text from the later copy Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 830.

<sup>133</sup> *Die Briefe*, ed. by Tangl, p. 203, n. 1. Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Rastatt 22.

<sup>134</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1514–21; Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', p. 31. On the wider context of Charlemagne's Klosterpolitik, see Josef Semmler, 'Episcopi potestas und karolingische Klosterpolitik', in *Mönchtum, Episkopat und Adel*, ed. by Borst, pp. 305–95; Innes, 'Kings, Monks and Patrons'; Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, pp. 115–34.

<sup>135</sup> MGH DD Kar., 1, no. 89; Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, 'Zu den schriftlichen Zeugnissen für die Anfänge der Reichsabtei Hersfeld', *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte*, 107 (1971), 94–135.



an idealized account of the conversion of Saxony in the *Vita Sturmi*.<sup>136</sup> However, the idea of the court maintaining involvement in the monastery was perhaps less welcome. It is in this context that we should see Eigil's presentation of the Sturm-Lull argument. Lull appeared to be an important figure in Charlemagne's Saxon policy, partly because of the location of Mainz in relation to the mission field and partly because of the Anglo-Saxons' historic desire to convert the Saxons.<sup>137</sup> This fact might be more important than the events of the 760s as far as the purpose of the Sturm-Lull story is concerned: the connection Eigil made between Lull and Pippin III seems anachronistic because between 754 and Pippin's death in 768 it does not appear that Lull had any influence within the Frankish kingdoms.<sup>138</sup> Lull was perhaps more symbolic of perceptions in the Middle Rhine Valley of an interfering royal court during the Saxon campaigns than a genuine enemy of Fulda; for Eigil, Lull was a concrete figure on whom could be placed associations with the Carolingian threat to the self-governing principles of the *Regula s. Benedicti* and the monastery's separation from the temporal world. In this sense, Eigil's defence of Fulda's independence and the principles of the *Regula s. Benedicti* was a crucial element in the beatification of Sturm. At the same time, however, it created a degree of separation between any Anglo-Saxon legacy and the pursuit of the Benedictine contemplative life.

### Sturm's Visit to Italy

Between Boniface's establishment of monastic Rule at Fulda and the Sturm-Lull crisis, the brethren of Fulda are said to have embraced the *Regula s. Benedicti* in earnest. Eigil wrote:

Porro cum fratres regulam sancti patris Benedicti inhianter observare desiderassent et ad monasticae disciplinae normam sua corpora mentesque toto annisu inclinassent, consilium utile inierunt, quatenus aliqui ex ipsis ad magna alicubi mitterentur monasteria, ut fratrum ibi concordiam et conversationem regularem perfecte discerent. Quod cum sancto fuisset indicatum episcopo, prudens illorum collaudavit consilium et hanc legationem studioso Sturmi iniunxit.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 24.

<sup>137</sup> Palmer, "Vigorous Rule" of Bishop Lull', pp. 268–75.

<sup>138</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1487–90.

<sup>139</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 14: 'When the brethren had conceived a burning desire to follow the rule of the saintly father Benedict, and had striven to conform their minds and bodies to the discipline of the

Again the communal will is of great significance and, moreover, Sturm as the saint at the heart of the *vita* was now an agent of that will. The focus of Sturm's investigation was the monasteries of Rome. On his travels, at least according to Eigil, Sturm also learnt much about monastic observances in Tuscany. Finally, in 747, Sturm returned to Fulda, described all the things he had encountered, and through his own behaviour inspired his brethren to follow the Rule. It is clear that this was not supposed to have been a pure form of the *Regula s. Benedicti* but, as would be expected, one improved by the monastic observances Sturm had encountered in Rome and Tuscany; nonetheless the key authority that Eigil wanted to emphasize was that of the *Regula s. Benedicti*.

There is a problem with Eigil's account of Sturm's journey: Guy Ferrari demonstrated long ago that the *Regula s. Benedicti* was not followed in Roman monasteries until the tenth century.<sup>140</sup> Ferrari's study of Roman monastic observance revealed a clerical reaction against monasteries, and the *Regula s. Benedicti* in particular, following the death of Gregory the Great.<sup>141</sup> Thereafter, although some monasteries did follow the Rule, there is simply no evidence that any monastery followed it exclusively, and it was at best used as a guideline.<sup>142</sup> Whatever Sturm might have learnt, it is unlikely that he found out much about the *Regula s. Benedicti* in its 'pure' form. It is equally unlikely that Eigil was misinformed about Sturm's activities since he claims, plausibly, to have been Sturm's pupil and friend for twenty years.<sup>143</sup> Perhaps it is appropriate to remember Paul Fouracre's warning that hagiographers are often at their most creative in their work when dealing with a saint's time abroad, covering events of which the audience has little knowledge — a problem only exacerbated when a great deal of time has also elapsed.<sup>144</sup> On the one hand, of course, Eigil was writing after Charlemagne's efforts to obtain the 'autograph' of the *Regula*.<sup>145</sup> On the other, Eigil's narrative emphasized the

monastic life, they formed a plan of sending some of their members to well-established monasteries in other places so that they could become perfectly acquainted with the customs and observance of the brethren. When this prudent plan was submitted to the bishop [Boniface] he heartily approved of it and commanded Sturm to undertake the legation.'

<sup>140</sup> Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 379–407; Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 105 and n. 17; Claussen, *Reform of the Frankish Church*, pp. 157–65.

<sup>141</sup> Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 389–91.

<sup>142</sup> Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 380, 386.

<sup>143</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 1.

<sup>144</sup> Fouracre, 'Merovingian History', pp. 37–38.

<sup>145</sup> See above, pp. 180–81.

perceived *romanitas* of the *Regula s. Benedicti* which was a trait promoted by eighth-century popes and the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>146</sup> In light of the fact that Eigil was promoting the papal privileges of Fulda, the emphasis on Rome and the *Regula s. Benedicti* could be seen to be helping bind those two elements to the history of the monastery and thus reinforce the spiritual authority of the privileges.

Rudolf's *Vita Leobae*, written at Fulda only fifteen years later, suggests a different itinerary for Sturm's journey and consequently a different spiritual world for Sturm and the monastery. Describing how Boniface established Fulda and Leoba's Tauberbischofsheim, Rudolf wrote:

Volens ergo utrisque professionis ordinem regulariter observari, idoneum utrique magistrum studuit adipisci; misitque in Casinum montem Sturmi [...] ut in monasterio quod beatus pater Benedictus instituit disciplinam regularem et vitam moresque monasticos agnosceret.<sup>147</sup>

Sturm may well have visited Rome en route to Monte Cassino, but Rudolf makes no mention of this and nor does Eigil make any mention of Monte Cassino. Monte Cassino was only a 'Roman' monastery in the sense that the monastery's reinvigoration was led by Gregory II and the cult of Gregory I.<sup>148</sup> One could try to reconcile Eigil and Rudolf, as has generally happened when historians have considered the founding of Fulda.<sup>149</sup> But since the two sources give a different itinerary, it is more likely that the two Fulda monks were attributing different qualities to Sturm's journey. By binding Sturm to Monte Cassino itself, the very home of Benedictine monasticism, Rudolf reinforced the image of Fulda as a centre where the true spirit of the *Regula s. Benedicti* was strong, because it had received that spirit directly.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Wollasch, 'Benedictus abbas Romensis'.

<sup>147</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 10: 'And as he wished the observance in both cases to be kept according to the holy Rule, he endeavoured to obtain superiors for both houses. For this purpose he sent his disciple Sturm [...] to Monte Cassino so that he could study the regular discipline, the observance, and the monastic customs which had been established there by St Benedict.'

<sup>148</sup> Wollasch, 'Benedictus abbas Romensis'.

<sup>149</sup> For examples of synthesising the two accounts, see Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, p. 249; Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', p. 28; Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii', pp. 93–94.

<sup>150</sup> The bond between Sturm and Monte Cassino has been acknowledged as important in bringing the true spirit of the Rule of Benedict to Fulda, but that link has been seen to be real rather than a later literary construction nearly a century later. See Semmler, 'Studien zum *Supplex libellus*', p. 292; Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 248–50; Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', pp. 28, 38, 41; Arnold Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter: Die abendländische*

Rudolf's opposition to Eigil's narrative perhaps suggests that there was a developing power in the symbolic nature of Monte Cassino under Hrabanus Maurus and a changing attitude to the *Regula s. Benedicti* as the post-Aniane reforms progressed; Sturm, as the saintly medium that bound Fulda to its monastic order, consequently had to fulfil different roles depending on what it was that he was intended to symbolize.

Sturm's journey to Italy in ninth-century hagiography was, it appears, retrospectively shaped by the brethren's spiritual concerns at different points in the ninth century; it did not necessarily reflect a genuine past. On the one hand, when Eigil was writing, clearly the important 'symbol' was a spiritual relationship between Fulda and Rome; on the other hand, by the 830s, it appears in Rudolf's work that the brethren were more concerned about the spiritual purity of the Rule and a relationship between Fulda and Monte Cassino. The vehicle of the message — the saint — remained the same, but through the reshaping of a saintly past new priorities and monastic identities could be expressed.

### Leoba and the Female Religious Life at Wimborne

Rudolf's *Vita Leobae* (Fulda 836) is another text which belongs to post-anianischen Fulda. As such, its famous portrayal of the female religious life in the eighth century is likely more revealing of Carolingian reformed ideals rather than Bonifatian custom. Rudolf was keen to illustrate the education that Leoba had had in Britain, because it was precisely because of her reputation while at the double monastery of Wimborne that Boniface requested that she become Abbess of Tauberbischofsheim. Hrabanus Maurus, who asked Rudolf to write the *Vita Leobae*, also noted the perceived importance of Leoba's background in his *Martyrologium*.<sup>151</sup> At Fulda it was not just her time in Germany that was considered important. Rudolf described how the male and female monasteries at Wimborne had been constructed with large walls between them to maintain the separateness of the two communities, and how women entering the monastery were accepted on the

*Christenheit von 400 bis 900*, 3rd edn (Stuttgart, 2001), pp. 273–74; Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii', pp. 93–94.

<sup>151</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *Martyrologium*, ed. by John M. McCulloh, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, 44 (Turnhout, 1979), 28 Sept.: 'Leobae uirginis, quae in Britannia insula et Saxonum gente nata, uirginitatis propositum in monasterio posita nobiliter seruauit. Postea [...] a sancto Bonifatio [...] aduocata, ut famulas Dei in monasteriis Germaniae diuinis scripturas instrueret.'

condition that they did not leave.<sup>152</sup> This is followed by a description of the virtues of the Abbess Tetta, who is said to have worked hard to keep the monks and nuns apart, as well as promoting peace and forgiveness amongst her community.<sup>153</sup> Finally in Rudolf's account of Wimborne, he described how Leoba had entered the monastery whilst a child and soon had no other interest than the monastery, at which stage in the narrative Rudolf recounts Leoba's virtues and a dream she had that proved she was destined to travel abroad.<sup>154</sup>

Rudolf's purpose in writing was undoubtedly didactic, and perhaps therefore coloured more by hagiographical traditions and sensibilities in ninth-century Fulda than by any factual basis for Leoba's life.<sup>155</sup> Having accepted this, however, most historians writing about the historicity of the *Vita Leobae* have been divided between those who still see it as partly factual and those who are more sceptical about its value as a reflection of the eighth century.<sup>156</sup> It is difficult to give Rudolf's statements about Wimborne any credence whatsoever, given his distance in time and space from Southumbrian monasticism before 750. Nevertheless, some historians have accepted Rudolf's representation of the female religious life in England as 'accurate'.<sup>157</sup> It is clear, however, that the organization of double monasteries in

<sup>152</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 2: 'In quo duo monasteria antiquius a regibus gentis illius constructa sunt, muris altis et firmis circumdata et omni sufficientia sumptuum rationabili dispositione procurata, unum scilicet clericorum et alterum feminarum [. . .]. Feminarum vero quaecumque saeculo renuntians earum collegio sociari voluerat, numquam exitura intrabat.'

<sup>153</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, cc. 3–5.

<sup>154</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, cc. 7–8.

<sup>155</sup> Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon Women', p. 42, n. 38; Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, pp. 271–82; Julia M. H. Smith, 'The Problem of Female Sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780–920', *Past and Present*, 146 (1995), 3–37 (pp. 16–17); Foot, *Veiled Women*, I, 53.

<sup>156</sup> Representative of the first school is Hollis, who wrote that at times Rudolf was 'surely reconciling truth with didactic purpose' (*Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, p. 275). Hollis's work was followed closely by Head, 'Integritas in Rudolph'. Other straight readings of the text include Janet L. Nelson, 'Women and the Word in the Earlier Middle Ages', in her *The Frankish World 750–900* (London, 1996), pp. 199–221 (p. 210), and Hen, 'Milites Christi utriusque Sexus', p. 24. Of the second school Smith, 'Problem of Female Sanctity', pp. 16–17, is more overtly sceptical that the text reflects Leoba's life at all. Sarah Foot also has reservations about what Rudolf says about Wimborne (*Veiled Women*, I, 48).

<sup>157</sup> Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, p. 272. For recent work on double monasteries, see Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon Women', pp. 14–80; Barbara Mitchell, 'Anglo-Saxon Double Monasteries', *History Today*, 45 (1995), 33–39.

Anglo-Saxon England contained far more variety than Rudolf suggested.<sup>158</sup> Women were not often as segregated from male communities, or even the lay world, as Rudolf implies: monasteries were aristocratic and economic units that formed part of broader Anglo-Saxon communities, and there was no prevailing sense that female religious should live distinct from that world.<sup>159</sup> Even Aldhelm's *De virginitate*, which was written primarily for the nuns of the double monastery of Barking, blurred the distinction between male and female virtue and never went as far as to suggest the female religious should be divorced from the male and secular worlds absolutely.<sup>160</sup>

Rudolf's image of the female religious in England is not without parallels in other *vitae*. Willibald, in his *Vita Bonifatii*, also recounts how in Wessex nuns were unable to attend Boniface's sermons, although strictly speaking it does not say that they were not allowed to, just that they were 'continuously unable' to come.<sup>161</sup> More pertinently, it should be remembered that Bede said that in the 630s women who wished to enter the monastic life had to travel to Frankia to do so, providing plentiful opportunities for continental influences to affect Anglo-Saxon religious life.<sup>162</sup> Of the continental models for the female religious, in its austere spirit Rudolf's view perhaps most closely resembles that expressed by Caesarius of Arles in his *Regula virginum*, although no direct influence is clear within the *Vita Leobae*.<sup>163</sup> Caesarius was much stricter about the role the female religious should play in the

<sup>158</sup> On the different double monasteries, see Foot, *Veiled Women*, I, 49–56, 59–60. John Blair has also described the alleged layout of Wimborne — and its famous walls in particular — as 'exceptional' within the context of the Anglo-Saxon Church: see his 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: Topographical Review', in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 226–66 (pp. 257–58 and 259).

<sup>159</sup> Foot, *Veiled Women*, I, 44, 53–56.

<sup>160</sup> Aldhelm, *De virginitate*, pp. 226–323. Hollis does discuss this in her *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, pp. 75–112, but failed to relate it to the later part of her book when discussing Leoba. I am grateful to Emma Pettit for her comments on this topic.

<sup>161</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 2: 'quorum quidem quam plurimi, virili sexus robore confortati et lectionis instantia incitati, adeum confluxere et, saluberrimum scientiae fontem potantes, numerosa scripturarum volumina legendo recensere'.

<sup>162</sup> Bede, *HE*, III, 8.

<sup>163</sup> William Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul*, CSMLT, 4th Series, 22 (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 117–24. See also Daniel Hochstetler, 'The Meaning of Monastic Cloister for Women According to Caesarius of Arles', in *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Thomas F. X. Noble and John J. Contreni (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 27–40.

lay world, and in most cases forbade it altogether.<sup>164</sup> This kind of female monasticism was not widely followed amongst the Merovingian monasteries Anglo-Saxons visited but rather, as we saw earlier, it was Columbanian monasticism that generally prevailed. It is notable that Frankish veneration for female saints tended to develop in these same areas.<sup>165</sup> But with the rise of the Carolingians, Julia Smith has argued, the example of saintly Merovingian women like Geretrud of Nivelles was shunned in favour of late antique models of male sanctity such as Sulpicius Severus's St Martin.<sup>166</sup> Such developments are probably related to the continuous process of Carolingian monastic reform, which severely limited the freedom of abbesses or nuns to leave cloistered walls or perform any religious ceremonies.<sup>167</sup> In his harsh view of female monasticism, therefore, Rudolf did far more than simply to imply women had less of a role in the post-conversion German Church: his work represented a more widespread shift in expectations of female sanctity.

The historian is left, then, with two ninth-century symbols of female religious orthodoxy: Wimborne and Tetta, its abbess. Hollis wrote of Rudolf's Wimborne that it was presented as 'a fount and origin no less impeccable than Monte Cassino'.<sup>168</sup> This seems correct, as Rudolf's justification of Leoba's appointment in Germany is juxtaposed with the moral authority of the abbot, Sturm, who was said by Rudolf to have gained his knowledge of monastic rules from Monte Cassino.<sup>169</sup> Again one must remember the influence of the Benedictine reforms on Rudolf. But Tetta, although an admirable leader of the monastery, is restricted to playing the

<sup>164</sup> Caesarius, *Regula virginum*, c. 2: 'Si qua relictis parentibus suis saeculo renuntiare et sanctum ouile voluerit introire, ut spiritalium luporum fauces deo adiuvante possit evadere, usque ad mortem suam de monasterio non egrediatur, nec in basilicam, ubi ostium esse videtur.'

<sup>165</sup> Smith, 'Problem of Female Sanctity', p. 9.

<sup>166</sup> Smith, 'Problem of Female Sanctity', pp. 14–17. On the development of the image of St Martin as a saint, see Stancliffe, *St Martin and his Hagiographer*.

<sup>167</sup> See, for example, *Concilium Vernense* (755), c. 6, and *Institutio sanctimonialium*, c. 18. On the effect of Carolingian reforms on the female religious life, see Foot, *Veiled Women*, I, 66–72; Jane T. Schulenburg, 'Strict Active Enclosure and its Effect on the Female Monastic Experience (500–1000)', in *Medieval Religious Women*, vol. 1: *Distant Echoes*, ed. by John A. Nichols and Lillian T. Shanks (Kalamazoo, 1984), pp. 51–86 (pp. 56–58).

<sup>168</sup> Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, p. 274.

<sup>169</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 10: '[Bonifatius] monasteria construere coepit, ut ad fidem catholicam populi non tam aecclesiastica gratia quam monachorum ac virginum congregationibus raperentur [...] misitque in Casinum montem Sturmi [...] ut in monasterio quod beatus pater Benedictus instituit disciplinam [...] Similariter et [...] Tettam] deprecans ut ad solatium suae peregrinationis atque ad auxilium legationis sibi iniunctae transmitteret ei Leobam virginem.'



role of someone who marshals monastic discipline, not someone who was in themselves essential as an embodiment or siphon of monastic rule. Rudolf's view of monastic rule was, therefore, that it should be institutionalized and guided by the standards of special centres that acted as disseminators of knowledge independently of individuals.

### Leoba and Tauberbischofsheim

Rudolf begins his account of Leoba's life in Germany by listing her virtues. His list reads much like an extended version of the list he had given for Tetta: she led by example, she was moderate in all things, and so on. Added to the list now, and clearly important in Rudolf's conception of the female religious, was the fact that Leoba worked hard at becoming extremely learned in scripture and helping the younger nuns at Tauberbischofsheim in their own study.<sup>170</sup> The importance of education was also linked back to Leoba's days in Wimborne, since it was specifically because 'she had been trained since infancy in the rudiments of grammar and the other liberal arts [that] she tried by constant reflection to gain a perfect knowledge of divine matters'.<sup>171</sup> This connection between Wimborne and Leoba's continental life illustrates how Leoba, in Rudolf's scheme, had come to embody the institutionalized standards she had encountered in England. It was, however, only in Germany that she came to perfect her monastic lifestyle, in Rudolf's account.<sup>172</sup> In part this might betray Rudolf's high hopes for monastic standards in Germany, as his mention of Monte Cassino alongside Wimborne as a source for German monasticism seems to confirm. Perhaps more significantly, it demonstrates how saints could transcend earthly standards of monastic discipline, even in the most mundane of ways like acquiring knowledge: Wimborne had set the standard, but in Germany Leoba's diligence had raised her soul higher.

Rudolf tells four stories about Leoba's time in Germany in order to illustrate Leoba's newfound sanctity. Each emphasizes Leoba, not just as a saint, but more importantly as the leader of her community. In the first story outraged villagers accused the nun Agatha of giving birth and killing the baby, after they had found

<sup>170</sup> Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, p. 279.

<sup>171</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 11: 'Nam, cum ad ipsis infantiae rudimentis grammaticam et reliquis liberalium studiis esset institute, tanta meditationis instantia spiritalis scientiae perfectionem conabatur.'

<sup>172</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 11.

an infant's body.<sup>173</sup> Faced with a hostile crowd, Leoba encouraged her sisters to remain calm and then organized them to pray continuously, which had the result of moving the real culprit — a young crippled girl — to admit her crime, thus saving the community's reputation. In the second story a fire broke out in the village, and this time she calmed panicked villagers and organized them to fight the fire.<sup>174</sup> This story is followed by one that more closely resembles a miracle story: a great storm broke out which terrified the local lay and religious communities so much they took refuge in the church, but Leoba again remained calm and, after some private prayer, challenged the storm directly with public prayer and brought about calm weather.<sup>175</sup> The final story in this section of the text recounts how Leoba cured the nun Williswind of haemorrhoids just as the young nun was beginning to lose hope of life.<sup>176</sup> The theme running through these stories is clear: Leoba was a calming presence when fear threatened the lay and religious communities at Tauberbischofsheim.<sup>177</sup> But in the interaction between nuns and lay communities they also seem to contradict the image of female religious enclosure Rudolf set up in Wimborne. What this says about Rudolf's conception of female monastic rules needs further consideration.

In the modern historiography about these stories there remain doubts as to whether the stories genuinely represent Rudolf's voice. Pauline Head in particular has suggested that many of these stories may have their roots in eyewitness accounts collected by the monk Mago, whom Rudolf cites as a source in the preface to the *Vita Leobae*, and that Rudolf simply copied them.<sup>178</sup> Her argument rests largely upon the use of direct speech in the stories, which Head cites as evidence that these stories were told by people like Agatha rather than invented. This is, however, impossible to substantiate and ignores the entire history of rhetorical strategies in (historical) writing. Given the strong use of literary models like Constantius's *Vita Germani* one might more reasonably suspect that Rudolf's citation

<sup>173</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 12.

<sup>174</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 13.

<sup>175</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 14.

<sup>176</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 15.

<sup>177</sup> These stories are often treated individually rather than collectively, which has perhaps obscured their common message: see, for example, Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, pp. 281–82, and Head, 'Integritas in Rudolph', p. 49.

<sup>178</sup> Head, 'Integritas in Rudolph', pp. 41–42.

of Mago's sources was an elaborate attempt to give his own work credence.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, direct speech is often simply a literary device employed to give extra emphasis to features of a character or, because it binds words to people beyond the author's pen, credence to an idea.<sup>180</sup> Head's argument also relies on the idea that these stories must have been 'reports' because they create illogical breaks in Rudolf's themes that are never truly resolved; the interaction of female religious with lay communities, for example, goes against Rudolf's concern for the seclusion of nuns. This idea is troubling: the events in these stories are supposed to have occurred before Boniface's martyrdom in 754, in other words over eighty years before Rudolf was writing, so why would he have felt so obliged to remain true to the nuns' experiences, especially when he was using literary models to invent so much else about Leoba?<sup>181</sup> If there are inconsistencies within the *Vita Leobae*, it is difficult to see them as anything other than Rudolf's own creations, by accident or design.

There might be a solution to the problem of Rudolf's inconsistencies that will help bring a better understanding of the author's views on monasticism and place. Much confusion stems from the natural assumption that because the *Vita Leobae* is addressed to the nun Hadamout, it represents a creation of female sanctity intended for a purely female audience.<sup>182</sup> Too much can be placed upon such addresses, however, and it is instructive to remember that the Fulda *Vita Sturm* was addressed to the nun Angildruth but was clearly intended for a male audience as well.<sup>183</sup> The final three chapters of the *Vita Leobae* seem to suggest that Rudolf was writing for the monks of Fulda as well as Hadamout. Rudolf justifies why Leoba was not buried alongside Boniface (contravening his wishes) and explains why Eigil translated her relics from the north altar to the west porch.<sup>184</sup> Then Rudolf recounts two miracle stories proving the power of Leoba's relics, not for

<sup>179</sup> For Rudolf's sources, see Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, VI, 709–10, n. 179; Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon Women', p. 42, n. 38.

<sup>180</sup> See for example Nancy F. Partner, 'The New Cornificius: Medieval History and the Artifice of Words', in *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography*, ed. by Erich Breisach, *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 19 (Kalamazoo, 1985), pp. 5–59 (pp. 11–12).

<sup>181</sup> It is worth remembering again Fouracre's study of how hagiographical legends and truth separate over time and distance: Fouracre, 'Merovingian History'.

<sup>182</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, pref. Typical of an overemphasis on Hadamout at the expense of any other audience are Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, pp. 271–72, and Head, 'Integritas in Rudolph', pp. 43–44.

<sup>183</sup> Eigil, *VS*, c. 1.

<sup>184</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, c. 21.

female worshippers, but for men: in the first, a man was freed from some iron rings by praying at Leoba's tomb, and in the second a man with a debilitating twitch travelled all the way from Spain to the tomb where he was cured.<sup>185</sup> These stories appear to be more about the male veneration of female saints than anything to do with female religious behaviour or worship.

Combined with the earlier examples of female virtue which were clearly intended for a female audience, the *Vita Leobae* has much to say for both female and male audiences. In the beginning (Chapters 1–11) it offers a picture of female monastic discipline culminating in the foundation of a male and female monastic family in Germany deriving authority from Wimborne and Monte Cassino; then (Chapters 12–16) Leoba is established as a saint important to entire communities of men and women, before Leoba's status as a figure of importance for the whole of the Frankish Empire is established (Chapters 17–20); and finally Leoba is presented as a figure worthy of male veneration (Chapters 21–23). The text is not just about creating an *exemplum pro imitatione* for women but also about establishing Leoba as a saint worthy of universal veneration. Like the image of Ardo's Benedict of Aniane, Leoba as a saint eventually transcended monastic rules and was important for creating an institutional basis for others to follow monastic rules. Unlike Benedict, however, Leoba also gained her authority from the image of an earlier and significantly distant institution in Wimborne.

### *Frisian and Westphalian Monasticism*

Monastic observances in early Frisian foundations are more difficult to investigate than those of Germany. The fact that Willibrord appears to have had a monastic parish, with Utrecht and Süsteren under his personal sovereignty, seems particularly un-Roman.<sup>186</sup> That is, however, the impression of the charter evidence, and not how the situation was portrayed in the *vitae* of Liudger, Altfrid, and the anonymous author of the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. In the *vitae* it is notable that, again, no explicit connection was made between Willibrord and monastic observances: he was remembered simply as a bishop and missionary. The first evidence for a Frisian concern for monastic observances comes from Altfrid, who wrote that Liudger

<sup>185</sup> Rudolf, *VL*, cc. 22–23.

<sup>186</sup> Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', pp. 85–94; de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism', p. 628.

visited Monte Cassino to learn about the *Regula s. Benedicti* at source.<sup>187</sup> So impressed was the young nobleman that he returned to Westphalia in 799 and built a monastery at Werden on his own lands. The story about Liudger's journey to Italy helped to present the monastery as a centre of monastic orthodoxy.<sup>188</sup> An earlier Liudgeriden monastery in Münster was also constructed, it is said, 'sub regula canonica Domino famulantium', although if this means something like Chrodegang's *Regula canonicorum* there are problems posed by the slow diffusion of such rules; Rudolf Schieffer has suggested more plausibly that Altfred was anachronistically referring back to the reforms of Benedict in 816–17.<sup>189</sup> Liudger's foundations either way were both presented as running in the 'correct' spirit, as a monastic audience would recognize. The textual restructuring in the *Vita secunda Liudgeri* changes this picture by surprisingly lessening the association with Monte Cassino, with the author making little reference to Werden and building up the role of Charlemagne in the story instead.<sup>190</sup> Liudger was an important saint as a bishop and pastor, but as such his power to represent monastic values was uncertain.

### Conclusion

Cults of saints in the early Middle Ages developed within monastic contexts. Relics were often buried and venerated within monasteries, while it usually took the literary and material resources of such institutions to produce saints' Lives. The extent to which definitions of sanctity were shaped by monasticism was, however, context specific. The fact that Alcuin was writing for the community at Echternach, for example, did not mean Willibrord was portrayed as a monastic *exemplum pro imitatione*. On the other hand Willibald, writing the *Vita Bonifatii* for a wider audience, still felt it appropriate to illustrate modes of monastic living and an attachment to the *Regula s. Benedicti*. Audience did not always determine content. Moreover, as the reform movements of Boniface, Chrodegang, and Benedict of Aniane illustrate, there were always elements of lay society keen to involve themselves with monastic institutions, and elements of religious society with little interest in austerity or rules.

<sup>187</sup> Altfred, *VLger*, I. 18.

<sup>188</sup> Von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, pp. 112–14.

<sup>189</sup> Angenendt, *Liudger*, p. 111; Schieffer, 'Die Anfänge der westfälischen Domstifte', pp. 181–82.

<sup>190</sup> *Vita Liudgeri secunda*, I. 14–15; Kaus, 'Zu den Liudger-Viten', p. 36.

The cases of eighth-century Bavarian hagiography and Fulda's hagiographical traditions provide examples where saints were in part defined in relation to monasteries and monastic *regulae*. Willibald's ascetic authority was derived from time spent in Monte Cassino, learning and, significantly, reinvigorating the *Regula s. Benedicti* at source. The dynamics that shaped this image of Willibald appear to have come from the Bonifatian reforms and, perhaps, a reaction to Ardeo of Freising's attempts to claim Corbinian had already introduced the *Regula* to Bavaria before Boniface's time. Rarely do constructions of sanctity appear devoid of didactic purpose or politics. Indeed in Fulda, Eigil responded to the monastery's problems in the early ninth century by promoting Sturm as a saint because, unlike Boniface, he could be portrayed as an agent of Fulda's communal will. But even this image of Sturm changed in Rudolf's *Vita Leobae* to put the emphasis back on Boniface and replace Eigil's Italian *regula mixta* with a purer Benedictine order learnt, again, from source at Monte Cassino; Hrabanus's own vision of Fulda's spiritual topography needed its own hagiographical expressions, and Sturm's relationship with monastic discipline had to shift as a result. One might also note the influence of the so-called *anianischen* reforms in developing attachments to the *Regula s. Benedicti* in the ninth century. Willibald, Sturm, Leoba, and, maybe, Liudger in Werden were all presented in ways which reflected the monastic standards of the hagiographers rather than the pasts the *vitae* described.

The question remains of how imitable or inimitable the saints were in the ways they were presented to monastic audiences. Leoba perhaps comes closest to Ardo's Benedict of Aniane by transcending the standards she represented for other women to follow. In doing so, moreover, Leoba became a figure worthy of veneration by pious men and women alike. This appears exceptional amongst the *vitae* about the Anglo-Saxon 'missions'. Eigil shaped Sturm specifically to be a model abbot in the wake of the disastrous abbacy of Ratgar. Willibald also appears to have been presented as an *exemplum* others could imitate, because he illustrated the benefits of following Benedictine principles in the context of institutionalized monasticism. Some audiences could, in other words, have been expected to learn about monasticism or have their monastic values reinforced through the stories of the saints; in these cases monastic *regulae* were in some sense integral to the saint's special status as they brought their audiences closer to distant monasteries and the order those centres embodied.





## ROME

Papal authority and the image of Rome lay at the heart of Anglo-Saxon conceptions of their mission to the continent.<sup>1</sup> Successive popes offered support, developing their own positions in the changing worlds of the seventh and eighth centuries. The bond between Rome and the Anglo-Saxons was also given a prominent place in the *vitae*, creating a popular and much imitated motif. Images of 'Rome' in these writings must be reconsidered in relation to the process of the creation and idealization of saints. For many modern Christian historians the primary significance of the missions was 'the foundations of the unity of the medieval church and medieval papal authority'.<sup>2</sup> The Roman conversion of the Anglo-Saxons had instilled a strong bond between the papacy and the Germanic peoples of Britain; Willibrord and Boniface, it was thought, subsequently took this bond to the Franks.<sup>3</sup> Kassius Hallinger and others, however, have shown that the Merovingians already revered 'Rome', that the Anglo-Saxon missionaries did not follow strict Roman practices themselves, and that the Carolingians' subsequent devotion

<sup>1</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1431–35; Noble, *Republic of St Peter*, pp. 61–71.

<sup>2</sup> Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 577: '[die] Grund [...] der Einheit der mittelalterlichen Kirche und [...] die mittelalterlichen Papstmach'. See also Schieffer, *Wifrid-Bonifatius*, p. 286, and Wampach, *Willibrord*, p. 218. There is an element of artistic licence in Lutz E. von Padberg's recent comment that 'Rom war weit weg, die Autorität des Papstes unbekannt' in *Bonifatius*, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 15–44; Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, pp. 265–66; Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 272–73. (A change in emphasis in Brown's chapter on the Anglo-Saxons means the connection between Gregory the Great and Boniface was omitted from the second edition in 2002.)

to Rome was far from complete.<sup>4</sup> While debate has hitherto focused upon the presence or absence of pro-Roman sentiments, in this chapter I will concentrate primarily on hagiographical representations of connections with Rome as an expression of the way communities took interest in papal authority and other related ideals.

The word 'Rome' could conjure up many different meanings to the audiences of history.<sup>5</sup> Not every connotation was equally meaningful everywhere or contained in every reference to the city. At a fundamental level Rome was, of course, a real place with a grand and emotive history as an imperial city. The seventh and eighth centuries, however, witnessed something of a reorientation as Rome became less a functioning part of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire and increasingly an independent entity in its own right.<sup>6</sup> Across the Tiber from Rome the papacy played a significant role in Roman affairs, but by no means one that was all-encompassing or unchallenged: Rome and the papacy coexisted, but they were not one and the same thing.<sup>7</sup> Similarly Christians did not think of Rome as just the home of the papacy, but also as the location of a variety of independent churches, saints' cults, and relics.<sup>8</sup> Even devotion to the cult of St Peter, while closely associated with the papacy, could also be explained by Peter's status as an apostle and need not necessarily imply an attachment to papal authority.<sup>9</sup> The city of Rome was also attractive for monks wishing to learn about monastic discipline, not just for those wishing to visit the see of St Peter. It is important not to conflate all these different aspects of Rome's attraction. Likewise we must be careful to establish what the Anglo-Saxons' influence was on changing ideas of Rome, *romanitas*, and papal authority.

<sup>4</sup> On pre-Bonifatian reverence for Rome on the continent, see Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen'; Ewig, 'Der Petrus- und Apostelkult'. On the Carolingian Church and papal authority, see now Wilfried Hartmann, 'Zur Autorität des Papsttums im karolingischen Frankenreich', in *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft*, ed. by Bauer and others, pp. 113–32.

<sup>5</sup> For a history of early medieval Rome, see Peter Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages* (London, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> Noble, *Republic of St Peter*; Delogu, 'The Papacy, Rome and the Wider World'.

<sup>7</sup> For a survey of recent thoughts on the interaction of the early medieval papacy with the Roman aristocracy and Italian state structures, see Marios Costambeys, 'Review Article: Property, Ideology and the Territorial Power of the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages', *EME*, 9 (2000), 367–96.

<sup>8</sup> On relics from Rome, see Alan Thacker, 'In Search of Saints: The English Church and the Cult of Roman Apostles and Martyrs in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West*, ed. by Smith, pp. 247–77, and Smith, 'Old Saints, New Cults'.

<sup>9</sup> Delogu, 'The Papacy, Rome and the Wider World', pp. 205–06.

To that end, this chapter will survey Frankish interest in Rome independent of Anglo-Saxon influence and how the Anglo-Saxon missions promoted a connection between saintly activity and papal authority, and finally explore the ways in which different groups responded to the Anglo-Saxons' ideas.

### *The Franks and Rome Before 750*

The impact of Boniface and his reforms on the Frankish veneration for Rome proved controversial for historians studying them in the first half of the twentieth century. Before Theodor Schieffer's essay 'Angelsachsen und Franken' in 1951, two competing schools argued either, following Albert Hauck, that Boniface had faced much opposition from the independent Frankish *Landeskirche* or, following Johannes Haller, that Boniface had been greatly successful because of a pre-existing Frankish veneration for Rome.<sup>10</sup> Schieffer, however, argued that the two camps had exaggerated respectively the independence of the Frankish Church and the success of Boniface.<sup>11</sup> The Frankish Church had already incorporated ideas from the Roman Church, while Boniface had only played a limited — if still important — role in developing things further.<sup>12</sup> In order to understand how Rome was treated in Merovingian hagiographical works it is first necessary to consider precisely what 'Rome' meant to the Franks before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons.

The relationship between the Church north of the Alps and Rome had a long, if uneven, history before 690 and the arrival of Willibrord.<sup>13</sup> Pope Symmachus had invested Caesarius of Arles with the *pallium* in 514 to accompany the title of *vicarius* and as part of a wider strategy of extending papal authority into regions no longer under Roman control.<sup>14</sup> The *pallium* was a liturgical vestment, probably a woollen band, that marked a symbolic extension of papal authority through those who received it.<sup>15</sup> The position of the bishops of Arles remained exceptional

<sup>10</sup> Hauck, *Kirchgeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 509–10; Haller, *Das Papsttum*, esp. I, 283–89.

<sup>11</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1431–35.

<sup>12</sup> Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen', passim. For Schieffer's continued insistence on Boniface's importance to developing Franco-Roman relations, see the concluding comments in his *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 286.

<sup>13</sup> For useful English summaries, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 110–23; Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 168–77.

<sup>14</sup> Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, pp. 129–32.

<sup>15</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 18–22.

outside Britain, however, and there was no other symbolic bond between north and south. The conversion of the Franks in the sixth century had been encouraged by Caesarius's rival Avitus of Vienne, who was a keen supporter of papal primacy even when he felt personally slighted by Pope Hormisdas.<sup>16</sup> Strong papal bonds with Arles and Vienne brought the importance of the papacy closer to the Franks. Later Gregory the Great (590–604), possibly capitalizing on links with Burgundy, had personally encouraged and chided Franks such as Queen Brunhild, although no other pope quite matched his interest in the North.<sup>17</sup> Some historians have pointed to the influence of the Italian *Regula s. Benedicti* in Columbanian monasticism as a sign of pro-Roman ideals.<sup>18</sup> But given that this was hardly in step with Roman monasticism at the time (as we saw in the previous chapter) it is unclear precisely what this says about attitudes to Rome or the papacy, if anything.<sup>19</sup> Frankish liturgy in all its forms displayed Roman influence and became increasingly Romanized as the Merovingian centuries developed.<sup>20</sup> Roman influence was also felt in the adoption of some saints' cults, with Roman martyrologies and *passiones* available in the North from the sixth century. In particular there was a relatively widespread cult of St Peter, the principal Roman saint.<sup>21</sup>

There remains a clear difference between the notion that the Merovingian Franks were open to and aware of the importance of Rome in its various forms and the proposition that they actively accepted papal authority. Early Frankish synods in particular had been conducted with apparent autonomy from the papacy and had declined in regularity in correspondence with the decline in Merovingian royal authority.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For Avitus's support for the conversion of Clovis, the first Catholic Frankish king, see Avitus, *Epistolae*, ed. by Rudolf Peiper, MGH AA, 6.2 (Berlin, 1883), no. 46; Danuta Shanzer, 'Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours', *EME*, 7 (1998), 29–57. For Avitus's views on papal primacy, see Avitus, *Epistolae*, no. 39; *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose*, ed. and trans. by Danuta Shanzer and Ian Wood (Liverpool, 2002), pp. 13, 123–24.

<sup>17</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 115–18.

<sup>18</sup> Wollasch, 'Benedictus abbas Romensis', pp. 121–22. On Merovingian monasticism, see Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, pp. 152–85.

<sup>19</sup> On the late establishment of the *Regula s. Benedicti* in Rome, see Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 379–402.

<sup>20</sup> Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen', pp. 324–25; Wollasch, 'Benedictus abbas Romensis', p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen', pp. 327–28; Ewig, 'Der Petrus- und Apostelkult'.

<sup>22</sup> Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter*, p. 181. Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen', pp. 347–51, noted that there was Frankish representation at some early Roman synods and papal representation

There is no evidence that these synods were held with a conscious avoidance of papal authority; rather, it would appear that the pope was simply not a factor. After the death of Gregory the Great, a century passed in which there was little great interest from Rome in Frankish affairs, nor from the Franks in papal affairs.<sup>23</sup> The papal attitude is explained by a persisting preoccupation with the surviving Roman Empire, which meant that popes would still often concentrate on the Mediterranean world rather than the North.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, the Franks had emerged in a post-Roman world where political and cultural unity was a fading reality and horizons were often selective. The works of Gregory of Tours (538–94), for example, were driven by interest in affairs directly relevant to Tours, with things like Gregory the Great's early years as pope more peripheral, if still of value.<sup>25</sup> Roman influence might have been important within Frankia, but it was not natural for the popes to assert their authority over Frankish bishops, nor for the Franks to seek papal injunctions, in the sixth and seventh centuries.

Individual groups or families, on the other hand, felt more interest in Rome and the papacy. The Pippinids, with their strong representation in the surviving evidence, provide the best example. The early Pippinid *Vita sancti Geretrudis* (c. 670), for example, recounts how Geretrudis of Nivelles had sought relics and books from Rome.<sup>26</sup> It is a passing comment within the text as a whole, but it plays its part in establishing the piety of Geretrudis through the reception of saints and knowledge. Geretrudis was not alone in her interests: her nephew Pippin II is known to have sent gifts to the papacy, as popes generations later reminded Pippin's descendants.<sup>27</sup>

at some Frankish synods, but that these contacts were at best irregular and were almost entirely lacking by the time Boniface resumed Frankish synods in 742–47.

<sup>23</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 46.

<sup>24</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', p. 1436; Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen', pp. 320–21. On the papal change from concentrating on Mediterranean affairs to becoming more active in the North, see Noble's *Republic of St Peter*.

<sup>25</sup> On the attitudes of Gregory of Tours, see in particular Thomas F. X. Noble, 'Gregory of Tours and the Roman Church', in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. by Kathleen Mitchell and Ian Wood (Leiden, 2002), pp. 145–61. More broadly, see Raymond van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 179–201, and Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 154–65.

<sup>26</sup> *Vita sanctae Geretrudis*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM, 2 (Hannover, 1888), c. 2; Arnold Angenendt, 'Willibrord als römischer Erzbischof', in *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande*, ed. by Kiesel and Schroeder, pp. 31–41 (pp. 37–38). On the dating of the text, see Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 303.

<sup>27</sup> *Codex Carolinus*, ed. by Wilhelm Gundlach, MGH Epp., 3 (Berlin, 1892), nos 1 and 33.

Such crumbs contribute to an impression that when, for example, Pippin III wrote a series of questions to Pope Zacharias in 747 he was doing so in the context of a longstanding interest in papal authority rather than direct Bonifatian influence.<sup>28</sup> Earthly worries played their part in the relationship too, and many of the early dealings between the Pippinids and popes were driven by fears that the Lombards in Northern Italy posed a continuing threat to Rome. In 739 Charles Martel was even invited to become the pope's protector, but the Frankish response was anaemic owing to Charles's alliance with King Liutprand of the Lombards.<sup>29</sup> Papal-Pippinid interaction evolved independently of Anglo-Saxon influence.

Representations of Rome in Merovingian hagiography suggest that the Eternal City's early importance was for its saints' cults and churches more than politics.<sup>30</sup> In the *Vita Audoini* (shortly after 688?) and *Vita Amandi* (early eighth century), Audoin of Rouen and Amandus of Maastricht are both said to have taken time to visit the shrines and churches of Rome in the mid-seventh century.<sup>31</sup> Caution must be taken here, however, because both *vitae* describe the journeys in near-identical terms, thus indicating narrow literary conventions had developed for associating saints with visits to Rome.<sup>32</sup> In both *vitae*, the cult of St Peter is more apparent than papal authority, which is never mentioned. Audoin was buried in a church dedicated to St Peter in Rouen.<sup>33</sup> Amandus is said to have had two visions of St Peter, one instructing him to become a preacher and the other reassuring him in

<sup>28</sup> *Codex Carolinus*, no. 3; Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', p. 1434; Semmler, 'Bonifatius, die Karolinger und "die Franken"'.

<sup>29</sup> *Codex Carolinus*, nos 1–2; Noble, *Republic of St Peter*, pp. 44–49. Boniface may have been involved in negotiations here as he was in Rome around the right time (Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 172), but the evidence is purely circumstantial.

<sup>30</sup> Note that this is not the same as saying the papacy was only a source of 'moralische Autorität' before Boniface, as Hauck insisted (*Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 407–08 and 510), but instead that Rome was important for reasons apart from the papacy. A good introduction to Merovingian hagiography, including some translated texts, is Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*. See also Ian Wood, 'Forgery in Merovingian Hagiography', in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, vol. v, MGH Schriften, 33 (Hannover, 1988), pp. 369–85; Wood, 'Vita Columbani and Merovingian Hagiography'; Fouracre, 'Merovingian History'.

<sup>31</sup> *Vita Audoini*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM, 5 (Hannover, 1910), c. 10; *Vita Amandi*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM, 5 (Hannover, 1910), c. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Compare the statement in the *Vita Audoini*, c. 10, that Audoin went 'ut ad sanctorum apostolorum limina adoranda Romae properare deberet', and the statement in the *Vita Amandi*, c. 6 that Amandus travelled 'ut ad limina beatissimum apostolorum Petri et Pauli properare deberet'.

<sup>33</sup> *Vita Audoini*, c. 17.

a storm, but this says more about the cult of St Peter in the North than Frankish perceptions of the papacy.<sup>34</sup> Some historians have wondered if such stories represent later, post-Bonifatian interpolations.<sup>35</sup> The importance of the papacy certainly grew over time, as suggested by the second *Vita Amandi* which details Amandus's contacts with Pope Martin I (d. 655).<sup>36</sup> A clearer indication of interpolation may be seen in the *Vita domnae Balthildis* about Queen Balthild (d. 680), the Anglo-Saxon wife of King Clovis II. This includes a story relating how she sent gifts to churches in Rome, but the story is only contained in the post-Bonifatian, ninth-century 'B' version of the text.<sup>37</sup> In general, this small selection of Merovingian *vitae* appears to show that Rome was considered to be important for its relics, churches, and association with St Peter, not because of the papacy per se. Any sense of a Frankish pre-Bonifatian veneration for Rome which might be equated with papal authority is lacking.

One Merovingian *vita* which stands out because it mentions the papacy is the *Vita Eligii*, although interpreting it as evidence is problematical because it has only survived in an expanded Carolingian version of the work.<sup>38</sup> It tells the story of Bishop Eligius of Noyon (d. 660), a powerful figure at the court of King Dagobert I, and it was written originally by Eligius's friend Dado. The passage about the papacy appears towards the end of the first book and recounts Pope Martin I's problems in combatting the Monothelite heresy and his subsequent death as an exile in Greece.<sup>39</sup> Whether this should be thought to reflect anything about the relationship between the Franks and the papacy in the seventh century would depend on the extent to which the core of the text is considered authentically Merovingian. Michel Banniard has defended the work's authenticity on linguistic grounds, while Paul Fouracre has suggested that it has the vivid character of a near-contemporary *vita*.<sup>40</sup> The reference to Martin displays none of the characteristics

<sup>34</sup> *Vita Amandi*, c. 7 and c. 10.

<sup>35</sup> For example *Vita Amandi*, ed. by Krusch, p. 403; Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 40–42.

<sup>36</sup> Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 245 and p. 313.

<sup>37</sup> *Vita domnae Balthildis*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM, 2 (Hannover, 1888), c. 9. See Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 115, although the following translation of the *vita* is misleading because it is not indicated which sections belong to the 'A' text and which to the 'B'.

<sup>38</sup> Dado, *Vita Eligii*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM, 4 (Hannover, 1902).

<sup>39</sup> Dado, *Vita Eligii*, I. 33–34.

<sup>40</sup> Michel Banniard, 'Latin et communication orale en Gaule franque: le témoignage de la "Vita Eligii"', in *The Seventh Century*, ed. by Fontaine and Hillgarth, pp. 58–86; Paul Fouracre, 'The



of post-Bonifatian conceptualizations of the institution and authority of the papacy. Martin, called simply *episcopus* rather than *papa*, seems to be revered within the confines of the text as a recent martyr who died valiantly defending the catholic faith against heresy. Dado wrote, for example, that ‘non est inferior gloria, sed potius excellentior sustinere martyrium, pro eo, ne scindatur ecclesia fallaciis hereticorum, quam est illa, ne imoletur idolis impulsu paganorum’.<sup>41</sup> It is also in this context of combatting heresy, rather than developing Franco-papal relations, that a letter from Martin to Amandus requesting his support should be considered.<sup>42</sup> The whole controversy pushed the papacy to define its authority in the West; that much seems evident.<sup>43</sup> But since writers like Dado matched the language of the fight for orthodoxy without the language of papal primacy, we should guard against thinking Martin’s supporters shared his entire vision for Rome’s new direction.

Evidence from Merovingian *vitae* in general seems to mirror other pre-Bonifatian sources in representing Rome as a source of saints, relics, and learning, not as the home of papal authority. When communities related to the past of saintly figures like Amandus they were bound to certain elements of Roman Christianity but by no means all. While this conclusion seems to reflect a pragmatic fact about the Merovingian relationship with Rome, it also helps to understand what Rome meant as an ideal; and where it had any meaning at all, Rome was not everywhere idealized by the Franks under the Merovingians as something identical to the papacy. On this basis, as we shall see, a contrast with Anglo-Saxon *vitae* is entirely appropriate.

Work of Audeonus of Rouen and Eligius of Noyon in Extending Episcopal Influence from the Town to the Country in Seventh-Century Neustria’, in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. by Diana Wood, *Studies in Church History*, 16 (Oxford, 1979), pp. 77–91 (p. 78). Against Banniard’s argument, see Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul*, p. 196 and n. 245.

<sup>41</sup> Dado, *Vita Eligii*, I. 34: ‘it is no lesser glory but rather more excellent to sustain martyrdom to keep the Church from being torn apart by heresy than it is to be sacrificed for pulling down the idols of the pagans’.

<sup>42</sup> On Martin approaching the Gallic Church for support, see Dado, *Vita Eligii*, I. 33. The letter is Pope Martin I, *Epistolae*, PL, 87, no. 2, on which see Georg Scheibelreiter, ‘Grieches – lateinisches – fränkisches Christentum: Der Brief Papst Martins I. an den Bischof Amandus von Maastricht aus dem Jahre 649’, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 100 (1992), 84–102; Delogu, ‘The Papacy, Rome and the Wider World’, p. 204.

<sup>43</sup> On the impact of the Monothelite controversy, see Henry Chadwick, ‘Theodore, the English Church and the Monothelite Controversy’, in *Archbishop Theodore*, ed. by Lapidge, pp. 88–95; Delogu, ‘The Papacy, Rome and Wider World’, pp. 204–11.

*Anglo-Saxon Relations with Rome through Saints' Lives*

**Rome in Insular Anglo-Saxon *vitae***

The Anglo-Saxons' attachment to Roman ideals has already been covered but it is worth restating the key points quickly.<sup>44</sup> The mission of St Augustine meant that many Anglo-Saxons owed their Christianity to Rome, and successive popes made sure that the fledgling Church was nurtured and led properly. Papal authority was reaffirmed when Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury (d. 690) and Abbot Hadrian (d. 709) were sent to England in 664, particularly when they led the rejection of Monothelitism at the Council of Hatfield in 680.<sup>45</sup> Abbot Benedict Biscop of Jarrow (d. 690) and Bishop Wilfrid of York (d. 709) not only promoted ideals in their churches but also provided a physical setting and a liturgy for Christian worship which offered an experience of Roman Christianity without the need to travel to Italy.<sup>46</sup> Unity, as Paul Meyvaert has demonstrated, did not necessarily mean uniformity, and aside from key issues such as the dating of Easter Anglo-Saxon practices were eclectic creations.<sup>47</sup> Rome provided a source for guidance on a variety of issues but it was not the only nature of Anglo-Saxon Christianity; few people, now or then, would stereotype the Anglo-Saxons simply as 'Romanists'.

It is important here to expand on the representations of papal authority in hagiographical contexts, because it sets the background to some continental developments. One of the earliest works of hagiography composed in the Anglo-Saxon territories was the *Vita Gregorii papae* written in Whitby, which used Gregory's writings and now-lost Roman traditions to transform the Pope into a saint.<sup>48</sup> Some Northumbrians thus sought to include at some stage a pope among those saints put forward to replace the loyalties of secular society.<sup>49</sup> For reasons that are unclear, Gregory did not prove a popular hagiographical figure and the cult developed

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 52–53, and Chapter 5, pp. 180–81.

<sup>45</sup> Bede, *HE*, IV. 17; Chadwick, 'Theodore'.

<sup>46</sup> Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *The City of Rome and the World of Bede*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1994).

<sup>47</sup> On 'diversity within unity', see Meyvaert, 'Diversity within Unity'; Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 72–75. On the situation in Britain, see van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried', although he draws the cultural battle lines too sharply at times.

<sup>48</sup> *Earliest Life of St Gregory*, ed. and trans. by Colgrave. Thacker, 'Memorializing Gregory the Great'; Rambridge, 'Doctor noster sanctus'.

<sup>49</sup> Ó Carragáin, *City of Rome*, p. 5.

independently of the Whitby Life.<sup>50</sup> His historical importance was not in doubt and he was celebrated by Bede in the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Chronica maiora* for his part in sending Augustine as a missionary and sending the *pallium* to establish papal authority within the Anglo-Saxon Church.<sup>51</sup> More popular as patrons were Cuthberht (d. 687) in Northumbria and Guthlac (d. 714) in Mercia, two figures designed around ideals and comparatively local interests. It was these hagiographical figures, partly modelled on Irish ascetics and the example of St Anthony, who supplied the benchmark for Anglo-Saxon sanctity.<sup>52</sup> Although there were elements of *romanitas* in these *vitae* — particularly in Bede's adaptation of the anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* — none had any reason to seek a connection between sanctity and papal authority. Figures like Augustine and Paulinus, meanwhile, passed by with curiously little hagiographical interest.

The story of St Wilfrid also played its part in discourses about Roman authority in Northumbria.<sup>53</sup> Stephanus described a number of incidents in which the pope's word could be used to overturn a Northumbrian king's decision to expel Wilfrid. In 679 Pope Agatho (d. 681) overturned the decision of King Ecgrith (d. 685) to eject Wilfrid and divide his diocese between the monks Bosa and Eata, although the King ignored the decision.<sup>54</sup> Twenty-five years later, Pope John VI (d. 705) found himself supporting renewed appeals from Wilfrid, who had been forced to give up his position and lands by King Æthilred of Mercia (d. 716) and King Aldfrith of Northumbria (d. 705), both of whom again ignored papal discontent.<sup>55</sup> The cultural tensions are palpable: the Wilfridian party expected papal authority to defend them, but successive kings regardless of their religious sympathies cared only for what they felt to be in their own interests.<sup>56</sup> Between these points of conflict, Wilfrid's travels to Rome also provided opportunity for the Bishop to place himself at the forefront of Roman orthodoxy: he had been educated in the Eternal City and, despite his precarious situation in 703, had sworn oaths to the papacy for

<sup>50</sup> Thacker, 'Memorializing Gregory the Great', pp. 79–82.

<sup>51</sup> Thacker, 'Memorializing Gregory the Great', p. 80.

<sup>52</sup> Cubitt, 'Memory and Narrative'; Jane Roberts, 'Hagiography and Literature: The Case of Guthlac of Crowland', in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, ed. by Michelle Brown and Carole A. Farr (Leicester, 2001), pp. 69–86.

<sup>53</sup> Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, esp. pp. 281–34.

<sup>54</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, cc. 29–32; Bede, *HE*, IV. 12 and V. 19.

<sup>55</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, cc. 46–55.

<sup>56</sup> Oswiu had an Irish education but Aldfrith preferred Roman traditions. For context, see Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, pp. 103–13 and 129–47; Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish*.

the whole of the British Isles.<sup>57</sup> What this says about Stephanus and his audience is important. It is clear from the text that they had shared in much of Wilfrid's fate. Several points in the narrative seem to serve as rallying points rather than defences, and one may wonder if the papal letters and documents Stephanus quotes were also intended to console rather than to meet the challenges of people from outside the text's circle.<sup>58</sup> Like the *Vita Gregorii papae*, however, the *Vita Wilfridi* enjoyed limited circulation and at best only represented one group's interest in Rome.

### Willibrord, Pippin, and Rome

The 'first' Anglo-Saxon to take the practical application of Roman ideas to the Franks was Willibrord.<sup>59</sup> Despite his association with the Romanist circles of Wilfrid, Willibrord's cultural background was more mixed than Levison gave full credit.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, in 690 Willibrord met Pippin II in Frankia and, having impressed the *maior*, was directed to Rome.<sup>61</sup> According to the note in his own calendar, Willibrord was sent to Pope Sergius I again in 695.<sup>62</sup> The precise outcome is obscured in the sources. The same marginal note in the calendar tells us that Willibrord was consecrated as *episcopus*, no more, no less.<sup>63</sup> Charters from his monastery of Echternach, near Trier, also indicate that he was only a bishop at this time.<sup>64</sup> Yet Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, the *Liber pontificalis*, and Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* all later claimed that Willibrord had been consecrated *archbishop* over the Frisians, making him the first such figure in the northern continental territories.<sup>65</sup> As an

<sup>57</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, c. 54.

<sup>58</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, c. 35 and c. 67.

<sup>59</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 56–57.

<sup>60</sup> Van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried'; Honée, 'St Willibrord in Recent Historiography'.

<sup>61</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 11; Alcuin, *VW*, c. 7.

<sup>62</sup> *Calendar of Willibrord*, fol. 39<sup>v</sup>. On Willibrord's visits to Rome, see Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 58–60; Wampach, *Willibrord*, pp. 216–18; Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, pp. 98–99, 103–08.

<sup>63</sup> *Calendar of Willibrord*, fol. 39<sup>v</sup>: 'In [...] anno sexcentesimo nonageisimo ab incar[n]atione ch[rist]i [...] in dignus fuit ordinatus in romae epis[copus] ab apostolico viro domno sergio papa.'

<sup>64</sup> To select just the famous charters: Echternach, nos 8, 14–15, 24.

<sup>65</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 11: 'Pippinus misit [...] Uilbrordum Romam [...] ut eidem Fresonum genti archiepiscopus ordinatur. Quod ita ut perierat impletum est, anno ab incarnatione Domini DCXCVI'; Alcuin, *VW*, c. 7: 'apostolicus eum ordinavit archiepiscopum'; *Liber pontificalis*, ed. by

archbishop Willibrord would have received the *pallium* from the Pope and thus been bound closely to Rome through the symbolism of the gift.<sup>66</sup> It is important to draw a contrast between metropolitan bishops, who had suffragan bishops under their authority as a matter of course, and archbishops, who supervised other churches including metropolitans through the delegated authority of the pope.<sup>67</sup> There are also implications for Pippin's interests in Rome: there were no archbishops amongst the Franks themselves and thus it may seem surprising that Pippin should want to establish one over his neighbours. Recent readings of the available evidence have tentatively suggested that Willibrord *was* perhaps made archbishop, but that he only made Utrecht his (arch)episcopal see later under Charles Martel.<sup>68</sup> Such a conclusion makes strong assumptions about Willibrord's association with Utrecht, however, because charters suggest that Willibrord's base was Echternach, with Utrecht a poor second, right up until his death.<sup>69</sup>

Tracing the story as a history of ideas reveals further how unclear the situation was. The *Liber pontificalis* for Sergius simply states that the Pope 'ordinavit Bertoldum Britanniae archiepiscopum atque Clementem [i.e. Willibrord] in gentem Frisonum'.<sup>70</sup> By the beginning of the eighth century these papal biographies were being updated regularly to the extent that Bede had access to one account of Gregory II before the Pope had even died, but not in the form that circulated amongst the Franks.<sup>71</sup> Nonetheless, Bede wrote in his World Chronicle of 725 that 'papa

Louis Duchesne, 3 vols (Paris, 1886), I, 86.15: 'Hic ordinavit [...] archiepiscopum [...] Clementem in gentem Frisionem.'

<sup>66</sup> Angenendt, 'Willibrord als römischer Erzbischof', p. 33; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 59.

<sup>67</sup> On the distinction, see Robert A. Markus, 'Ravenna and Rome, 554–604', *Byzantion*, 51 (1981), 566–78 (p. 571) (repr. in his *From Augustine to Gregory the Great* (London, 1983), XIV); Angenendt, 'Willibrord als römischer Erzbischof', pp. 31–33.

<sup>68</sup> Schroeder, 'Willibrord – Erzbischof von Utrecht oder Abt von Echternach?', pp. 351–52. The other evidence is from charters such as *Diplomata maiorum domus e stirpe Arnulforum*, ed. by Georg H. Pertz, MGH DD Mer., 1 (Hannover, 1872), no. 11, dated to 722, which confusingly calls Willibrord *episcopus* and *archiepiscopus*.

<sup>69</sup> Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, p. 151. Of course, the fact that the charters are Echternach's presents the problems of an obvious evidential bias, but they nevertheless indicate the strength of Echternach as Willibrord's centre.

<sup>70</sup> *Liber pontificalis*, ed. by Duchesne, 86. 15: 'he ordained Bertwald archbishop of the Britons and Willibrord among the people of the Frisians'.

<sup>71</sup> James Campbell, 'Bede I', in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, pp. 1–27 (p. 6); Roger Wright, 'Latino e Romano: Bonifazio e il Papa Gregorio II', in *La preistoria dell'italiano*, ed. by József Herman and Anna Marinetti (Tübingen, 2000), pp. 219–29 (pp. 225–28).

Sergius ordinavit venerabilem virum Willibrordum cognomine Clementem Fresonum genti episcopum'.<sup>72</sup> The papal version was not reproduced. By the 730s, when he elaborated on Willibrord's early career, the extension of a system of archbishops across the West connected to the pope through the pallium was a live issue. Pope Gregory III was particularly active and gave *pallia* to Boniface for Germania in 732, Ecgberht for Northumbria in 735 (the first for Northumbria since Paulinus died in 633), Nothelm in Canterbury the following year, and allegedly Willicharius of Vienne for the West Franks at some point unspecified around the same time.<sup>73</sup> All the while, lest we forget, Willibrord was still active in the North with his alleged 'pallium'. Most of these characters communicated with each other with the exception of the unfortunate Willicharius, who fled to Rome after Charles Martel's invasions.<sup>74</sup> Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* was revised up to his death in 735 and thus crossed into this period of international reorganization, his interest in it perhaps reflected by his *Epistola ad Ecgberhtum*.<sup>75</sup> The combined result was that Bede brought his account of Willibrord not just into line with historical ideas of archiepiscopal authority from Gregory I,<sup>76</sup> but also in accordance with Gregory III's own plans in Bede's own lifetime.

### The Bonifatian Circles and Rome

If Willibrord had set the scene, it was Boniface and his circle who had the most wide-ranging impact on the Franks and Rome. The influence of literary insular works on the *vitae* is unclear.<sup>77</sup> Lull, for example, was still trying to obtain copies of Bede's *Vita*

<sup>72</sup> Bede, *Chronica maiora* [*De temporum ratione*, c. 66], ed. by Charles W. Jones, CCSL, 123B (Turnhout, 1977), p. 529: 'pope Sergius ordained the venerable man Willibrord, also called Clemens, as bishop of the Frisian people'.

<sup>73</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 28; *Continuations of Bede*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English* (Oxford, 1969), s.a. 735; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. by Dorothy Whitelock (London, 1961), s.a. 735 (in D) and s.a. 736; *Liber pontificalis*, I, 92. 18.

<sup>74</sup> Story, *Carolingian Connections*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>75</sup> D. P. Kirby, *Bede's Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum: Its Contemporary Setting*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow, 1992), pp. 2–6. On the fate of Willicharius, see Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>76</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 183; Angenendt, 'Willibrord als römischer Erzbischof', p. 41.

<sup>77</sup> On the literary heritage of the *vitae* by Willibald and Hygeburg, see Palmer, 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull, pp. 255–58, and Chapter 7 below.

*Cuthberti* in its prose and verse forms in 764, not long before the latest the *Vita Bonifatii* could have been completed.<sup>78</sup> While it may be an exaggeration to say that Boniface's circle was starved of books, it has also often been difficult to determine whether they had read texts such as the *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>79</sup> In some respects, however, it would have been unnecessary. In c. 735, for example, Boniface wrote to Archbishop Nothelm of Canterbury requesting copies of Gregory the Great's letters he could not find in the papal archive and asking in which *anno Domini* Gregory had sent Augustine to Britain; he was ploughing similar intellectual furrows to Bede regardless of acquaintance with his work.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile the originality of writers like Willibald must be appreciated given the lack of any clear evidence for Anglo-Saxon or Merovingian influence on their *vitae*. Historians should see the work of Willibald and Hygeburg as distinctive cases, at once continuing Anglo-Saxon veneration for Rome and developing new ideals to suit their continental contexts.

Boniface visited Rome three times, in 719, 722, and 737–39, each visit evident in his letters and in the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>81</sup> On the first occasion he was ordained a priest and on the second, a bishop. Before the third visit, Pope Gregory III made Boniface *archiepiscopus* in 732.<sup>82</sup> This was done, according to Willibald, after Boniface had sworn submission (*subiectio*) to the Apostolic See.<sup>83</sup> As suggested above, Boniface's promotion fitted a wider pattern under Gregory of creating or renewing archbishoprics and extending the use of the *pallium*. Precisely what authority Gregory imagined is left somewhat vague in the letter beyond the celebration of Mass and the appointment of new bishops.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps he simply feared for order in the North as the Saracens continued their drive into Gaul, although

<sup>78</sup> Gutberct, *Die Briefe*, no. 116.

<sup>79</sup> Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources', pp. 34–38; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 43; Nicholas Brooks, 'English Identity from Bede to the Millennium', *Haskins Society Journal*, 14 (2005 for 2003), 33–52. The impression that Boniface's circle was starved of books is derived from letters written by Boniface and Lull requesting books from England: see for example *Die Briefe*, nos 15, 35, 75, 76, 91, 125, 126, and 127. Clearly some books did arrive and many more were copied in places like Fulda, Würzburg, and Hersfeld: see McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany'. It is perhaps time for a more systematic study of the literary worlds of the Anglo-Saxons on the continent.

<sup>80</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 33.

<sup>81</sup> 719: *Die Briefe*, no. 12, Willibald, *VB*, c. 5. 722: *Die Briefe*, nos 16–21, Willibald, *VB*, c. 6. 737–39: *Die Briefe*, nos 41–45, Willibald, *VB*, c. 7.

<sup>82</sup> Gregory III, *Die Briefe*, no. 28.

<sup>83</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>84</sup> Gregory III, *Die Briefe*, no. 28: 'qualiter enim eum utaris, ex mandato apostolico informatus cognosces'. See Schieffer, *Winfid-Bonifatius*, p. 158.



in that context it is unclear whether Boniface's appointment was intended to complement or replace the short-lived elevation of Willicharius of Vienne as archbishop.<sup>85</sup> Boniface, for his part, did little obvious with his new authority to begin with except start calling himself 'servus servorum Dei' ('servant of the servants of God'), a humble title much beloved of Pope Gregory I and perhaps a sign that he took the idea of extending papal authority seriously.<sup>86</sup> He did not visit Rome again for about six years, when he attended a council to discuss the (re)organization of the Bavarian Church. This third visit, as Lutz von Padberg has emphasized, was of great importance for defining the trajectory of Boniface's future work.<sup>87</sup> From this point onwards he also started using the title 'legatus Germanicus sedis apostolicae' as he began organizing his own church councils.

Willibald turned the fragments of evidence from Boniface's letters into a more elaborate story. The importance of each visit was explained carefully by Willibald, and it was made clear that the papacy was at the root of all Boniface's authority even before he was consecrated as an archbishop. On his first visit, having explained to Pope Gregory II that he wished to preach amongst the Germans, Boniface proceeded only with the Pope's permission and, significantly, with the task redefined by the Pope as discovering whether German pagans were ready for Christianity.<sup>88</sup> Boniface was also bound to the papacy at that time by the adoption of his new Roman name (at the expense of his Anglo-Saxon name 'Wynfrith'), although Willibald misleadingly places this event during the second visit in 722.<sup>89</sup> Rome

<sup>85</sup> Schieffer, *Winfid-Bonifatius*, p. 160.

<sup>86</sup> On Gregory's title, see Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 26–31 and p. 94.

<sup>87</sup> Von Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 53–59.

<sup>88</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 5. See also *Die Briefe*, nos 16–21, which show that Boniface returned to the Franks with the support of the papacy.

<sup>89</sup> Wilhelm Levison, 'Willibrordiana', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, 33 (1908), 517–30 (p. 529). Levison argued convincingly that Wynfrith was renamed by Gregory II on 15 May 719 after the third-century martyr Boniface of Tarsus, whose festival was held on 14 May in Rome. The earliest explanations of Boniface's name emphasize its literal meaning, 'doer of good', in relation to scripture: see Liudger, *VG*, c. 9 ('benefacite his qui oderunt vos, ut sitis filii Patris vestri, qui in caelis est (Matt. 5. 44–45)') and *VaB*, c. 1 ('qui timet Deum, faciet bona (Eccl. 15. 1)'). Christoph Weber, 'Die Namen des heiligen Bonifatius', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter*, 30 (1954), 39–66 (pp. 58–66) suggested that it was this literal meaning that gave 'Bonifatius' its special resonance when Gregory came to rename Wynfrith. For a detailed study of the relationship between the cults of the two Bonifaces, see Palmer, 'Frankish Cult of Martyrs', and also Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*, pp. 81–82, 137, 150–56 and 160, for some useful comments. The cult of saints' names has recently been illuminated by Lifshitz, *Name of the Saint*.

proved to be a source of saints' relics for Boniface and he left with 'numerosa reliquiarum'.<sup>90</sup> He then worked with Willibrord in Frisia for three years, but refused to succeed his countryman as bishop, saying, 'I came to the German people at the express command of Pope Gregory of blessed memory';<sup>91</sup> the task was no longer presented as his own decision, but the Pope's. The second visit to Rome is given prominence by Willibald, who placed it halfway through the text and described the events in some detail.<sup>92</sup> On this occasion Boniface was summoned to Rome by Gregory II, who consecrated him as a bishop of Germany; again, the initiative is clearly explained as being taken by the papacy, not Boniface. The third visit receives less attention, but Willibald says Boniface 'Romam venit ut apostolici videlicet patris salubri frueretur conloquio et sanctorum se, iam aetate proventus, orationibus commendaret';<sup>93</sup> after a year engaged in such prayer, Boniface returned home. There are two clear images of Rome within this account: of Rome as a city full of relics and shrines, and of Boniface as a figure who, despite his sanctity, was subordinate to the papacy.

Willibald's representation of Boniface and the papacy was particularly significant because it helped to portray the saint as the model of Catholic orthodoxy. This is evident in the description of Boniface's reform synods of 742–47.<sup>94</sup> Willibald wrote that:

In quo Bonifatius archiepiscopus [...] pontificatu praesidens, Romanae ecclesiae sedisque apostolicae legatus [...] — primum missus a sancto et venerabili sedis apostolicae pontifici Gregorio iuniore, a primo secundo, et Gregorio a secundo iuniore, cum primo tertio, viro honorabili — ob salutarem doctrinae caelestis augmentum admonuit conservari.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 5.

<sup>91</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 5: "Ego [...] a beato sanctae recordationis Gregorio pape Germanicis mandatum gentibus detuli."

<sup>92</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 7: 'went to Rome in order that he might have further discussions with the apostolic pontiff and to commend himself, now in his declining years, to the prayers of the saints'. Franz Flaskamp suggested, in his 'Wilbrord-Clemens und Wynfrith-Bonifatius', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 157–72 at p. 169, that the journey was prompted by the death of Willibrord in 739 and Boniface's wish to retire to preach in Frisia. There is, however, no evidence to support this supposition.

<sup>94</sup> On the synods, see Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1450–54; Ewig, 'Milo', pp. 424–29; Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit*, pp. 47–63; Reuter, "Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik".

<sup>95</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8: 'At these Archbishop Boniface presided [...] and being a legate of the Roman Church and the Apostolic See, sent as he was by the saintly and venerable Gregory II and

The connection between orthodoxy and the papacy is altogether apparent in the records of the councils.<sup>96</sup> It is only in a letter of Boniface to Cuthberht of Canterbury on the matter that there is talk of declarations of 'eternal fidelity' to St Peter.<sup>97</sup> Willibald followed Boniface's line to gloss the situation and present Boniface as an instrument of papal authority.<sup>98</sup> Willibald followed this image by comparing Boniface's synods to the anti-heretical synods of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451).<sup>99</sup> Thus Boniface's synods were placed in the great tradition of the early ecumenical councils and the defence of the orthodoxy that Rome, in the papal sense of the word, had come to symbolize. Willibald did not simply give an account of the synods, but portrayed them in relation to papal authority and earlier synods in order to legitimize Boniface's assumed position as a leader within the Frankish Church.

The relationship between Boniface and the papacy as it is presented by Willibald fits easily within Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the Catholic Church. It seems from the Boniface correspondence, however, that the relationship was at times icier than the *Vita Bonifatii* would suggest it had been during Zacharias's pontificate. Boniface appears to have felt confident enough to raise concerns with Pope Zacharias over surviving pagan practices in Rome.<sup>100</sup> Later he accused Zacharias of the sin of simony, and Zacharias chastized Boniface for ordering a rebaptism after a Bavarian priest had made grammatical errors in his invocation of the Trinity at the

later by Gregory III, he urged that the numerous canons and ordinances decreed by these four important and early councils should be preserved in order to ensure the healthy development of Christian doctrine.'

<sup>96</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 56, which combines the *Concilium Germanicum* and the council of Les Estinnes.

<sup>97</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 78, e.g.: 'Decrevimus autem in nostro sinodali conventu et confessi sumus fiden catholicam et unitatem et subiectionem Romanae ecclesiae fine tenus vitae nostrae velle servare.'

<sup>98</sup> It is important not to confuse Boniface's role as a papal legate with direct papal machinations, as Hauck and Caspar did; see, for example, Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 499, and Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttum*, II, 708. Boniface's letters suggest that he acted with independence and generally reserved making contact with Rome for the purpose of reporting developments, seeking approval for what he had done, and asking for help when his actions met with problems; see Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', p. 1439.

<sup>99</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8.

<sup>100</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 50: 'Nam si istas paganas ibi paternitas vestra in Romana urbe prohibuerit, et sibi mercedem et nobis maximum profectum in doctrina aecclesiastica proficerit.' See Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, p. 268.

moment of initiation.<sup>101</sup> These were isolated interludes in an otherwise positive and supportive relationship, but they show that Boniface's connection with the papacy contained some subtle nuances. The *Vita Bonifatii* drew on the letters of Boniface, but in creating a coherent narrative out of the nuggets of information they contained, Willibald smoothed over the cracks and thus invested the facts with a new form. The lengthy justification of Boniface's rights to hold synods was particularly important because in his synods he had used such a platform to assert the primacy of the papal see;<sup>102</sup> justifying such actions in a narrative about a saint brought renewed religious force to those assertions. Boniface's authority had, however, been questioned by the Franks: he had been refused the vacant see of Cologne and was forced to take up the see of Mainz, from which he had deposed Gewilib.<sup>103</sup> Later Lull was not recognized as Archbishop of Mainz until 782, after twenty-seven years at the see, despite Boniface's efforts to secure the position of his friend before his death.<sup>104</sup> The *Vita Bonifatii* therefore recast Boniface's career to emphasize the powerful relationship he had with the papacy and how Lull was his successor to that relationship; with support from the Franks uncertain, the position of the Anglo-Saxons after 754 was thus promoted.

The authority of the papacy was emphasized further in Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*. Hygeburg relates the story of how Willibald came to leave the monastery of Monte Cassino and became bishop in 741.<sup>105</sup> Abbot Petronax instructed Willibald to leave the monastery, committing him to accompany a Spanish monk on a visit to the papacy. This explanation is important within the text because, after Willibald's pilgrimage, it is concerned with the benefits of adhering to the *Regula s. Benedicti*, which expressly discouraged monks from wandering around without purpose or their abbot's permission.<sup>106</sup> While in Rome Willibald was informed by Pope Gregory III that Boniface had requested the monk be sent to work in Germany. Initially, Hygeburg wrote, Willibald was reluctant to go without his abbot's permission because of his monastic vows. The Pope, however,

<sup>101</sup> Only Zacharias's indignant responses have survived, making it difficult to ascertain exactly what Boniface had originally written: Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, nos 58, 68.

<sup>102</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 78.

<sup>103</sup> Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, nos 60, 80. Opposition to Boniface is generally seen in terms of aristocratic tensions with the Carolingian family; see Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1450–54; Ewig, 'Milo', pp. 424–29; Büttner, 'Bonifatius und die Karolinger', pp. 32–34.

<sup>104</sup> *Die Briefe*, no. 93; Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 233–40.

<sup>105</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5.

<sup>106</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti*, cc. 1 and 61.

decreed that his own order was sufficient. Hygeburg's justification of the Pope's action is significant:

Summus ille sanctae auctoritatis pontifex respondit, illumque sine sollicitudinis ambiguitate securum cum suae iussionis licentia oboedientialiter pergere precepit, dicens: 'Qui si illum ipsum abbatem Petronacem uspiam transmittere me libet, certe contradicere mihi licentiam non habet nec potestatem.'<sup>107</sup>

This is one of the earliest and most emphatic articulations of the authority of the papacy written in the Frankish kingdoms. It is combined with a description of the pope as 'Ruler of the People/Tribes' (*gubernator gentium*), an indication of the pope's supposed high earthly authority.<sup>108</sup> At the same time it is not clear from where, in reality, Gregory had derived the right to transfer Petronax anywhere and it is most likely a fiction. Hygeburg was not describing a practical relationship between the pope and someone with papal authority like an archbishop or legate; instead she was making a grander claim to the universal authority of the pope over the Christian peoples.

The story of Willibald provides only half the story. In her often-ignored account of Wynnebald's life, Hygeburg developed the imagery of a powerful and controlling papacy further. When Willibald and Wynnebald first arrived in Rome, Hygeburg claimed,

Tunc ille herus agilis et adhuc caeleps omnipotentis Altithroni magna ditatus erat prerogativa et caeleste instigatus gratia, tonsuram accipere et Dei servitio se subiugare studivit. Et sic sollerter saluberrimam sapientiae exorsus est auctoritatem, ut ille sacre lectionis ingenio absiduè inherendo subsummatim divino se subdidit exercitio et superni roris humida inrigatus, germen in eo iam tunc frugiferum florere cepit virtutum.<sup>109</sup>

On this occasion the location is given as the 'church of St Peter, prince of the apostles' (*basilica sancti Petri apostolorum principis*), making an explicit connection

<sup>107</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5: 'The supreme pontiff, in whom is vested the highest authority, at once replied that his command was sufficient permission, and he ordered him to set out obediently without uneasiness of mind, saying, "if I am free to transfer the Abbot Petronax himself to any other place, certainly he has neither the licence nor power to oppose my wishes".'

<sup>108</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5.

<sup>109</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 2: 'Then [the pope], the agile master and hitherto a great tree of the all-powerful heavenly throne had been enriched by prior right and roused by celestial grace, and Wynnebald was keen to receive tonsure and subjugate himself to the service of God. And in this manner he shrewdly began the wholesome authority of wisdom, so that he could supply himself with many great, divine, sacred lectures and, irrigating with the moistness of heavenly dew, bring to flower the germs of fruitful virtues in them.'

between the pope, St Peter, and their church. The imagery, almost lost in the convoluted prose, seems to present the pope as a lone figure, a 'tree' (*celeps*), who begins to become powerful by encouraging the Anglo-Saxons to take up pious work. Hygeburg attributes Gregory II with a direct role in encouraging Wynnebald to become a monk. It is worth reiterating that the papacy did not have to be strong to influence willing Anglo-Saxons, and indeed Hygeburg admits as much. If, as it seems, the story of Wynnebald was intended to develop a cult in Eichstätt in the 770s, then for the faithful to understand the legends of their saint meant they were expected to understand the fundamental role the papacy had played in guiding their saint to them. The story of Willibald and Gregory III may have had a similar function. The *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* appears to present some strong claims about the power of the papacy and, placed in the context of the text's origins, promoted a reverence for the papacy in Bavaria in the second half of the eighth century.

### *Responses to the Anglo-Saxon Missions and Rome*

#### **Arbeo of Freising's Saints**

The stories about Anglo-Saxon activities in Bavaria prompted a reaction that challenged the history portrayed in the *vitae* while adopting the importance of the papacy. Willibald claimed that Boniface had reformed and reorganized the Bavarian Church in 739, dividing it into four new dioceses (*parochia*) and appointing new bishops in Salzburg, Freising, and Regensburg.<sup>110</sup> A letter reveals that Gregory III supported Boniface's plans and had already appointed Vivilo as Bishop of Passau.<sup>111</sup> Modern historians have perceived a longer history here, going back to a reference to Duke Theodo of Bavaria visiting the papacy in 716.<sup>112</sup> Whether there was any deeper connection between the papacy and the Bavarian Church is unclear from the surviving sources. What there was, on the other hand, was a longer history to the bishoprics of Freising and Salzburg than Willibald suggests. The origins of

<sup>110</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 7.

<sup>111</sup> Gregory III, *Die Briefe*, no. 45.

<sup>112</sup> *Liber pontificalis*, 91. 4. Löwe, 'Bonifatius', pp. 96–104, argued that Boniface was welcomed as a papal representative in Bavaria and that, with the weakness of the papacy at this time, the Bavarian dukes had probably taken the initiative. He extends the argument to suggest that Boniface was then unwelcome when Carolingian-Agilolfing conflict erupted. Against this view, see Jahn, 'Hausmeier und Herzöge', p. 337.

these two dioceses, and their connections to Rome, were set out in two saints' Lives written by Arbeo of Freising between 769 and 772.<sup>113</sup> As we saw in Chapter 5 with regards to monasticism, these articulated a revision of Willibald's version of the past which borrowed many of the same frames of reference.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, in Arbeo we are dealing with a figure whose social world crossed any perceived Carolingian-Agilolfing frontiers.<sup>115</sup> Arbeo's challenge to the Bonifatian view of Bavaria and Rome was led by spiritual ideals rather than earthly ones.<sup>116</sup>

Rome is mentioned twice by Arbeo in the *Vita Haimbrammi*. Emmeram first developed the desire to visit Rome, or so we are told, when he had a vision that he would end his life as a martyr.<sup>117</sup> Before he left he agreed to help Ota, the daughter of a local magnate, who had become pregnant by Sigibert, her lover and son of a local *iudex*.<sup>118</sup> To save Sigibert, Emmeram allowed Ota to tell her father, *dux* Landperht, that he was the father of the child; then he set out for Helfendorf, rather than Rome, where he awaited Landperht and his own martyrdom. Eventually Landperht found Emmeram and it is in a dramatic exchange at this stage in the story that Rome is mentioned for a second time in part of a speech by Emmeram: 'Ad Romam me iturum promisi, limina [. . .] apostolorum principis Petri, cuius ecclesiae euangelica auctoritate fundata esse dinoscitur.'<sup>119</sup> Whether any of this is true is entirely open to speculation as there is no corroborating evidence. But in a *vita*, the veneration of Rome as a centre from which *euangelica auctoritate* was derived has more in keeping with Anglo-Saxon perceptions of topographies of sanctity than the attitudes evident in the continental *vitae* that preceded them.

The relationship between Arbeo's writings and the Anglo-Saxon veneration of Rome is, as with the *Regula s. Benedicti*, more apparent in the *Vita Corbiniani*. Corbinian is said to have visited Gregory II during the lifetime of Pippin II, a

<sup>113</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Haimbrammi* and *Vita Corbiniani*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRG, 16 (Hannover, 1920), on which see most recently Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 150–60.

<sup>114</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 157–58. See also Chapter 5 above, pp. 190–92.

<sup>115</sup> Jahn, 'Bischof Arbeo von Freising'.

<sup>116</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 158.

<sup>117</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Haimbrammi*, c. 8: 'vir sanctissimus per spiritum providens finem suae vitae adpropinquantem [. . .]. Coepit namque licentiam a cunctis inhabitantibus poposcere, ut orationis studio ad Romam ire licentiam ei concedere deberent'. On the symbolic imagery in Arbeo's account of St Emmeram's martyrdom, see Palmer, 'Frankish Cult of Martyrs'.

<sup>118</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Haimbrammi*, c. 9.

<sup>119</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Haimbrammi*, c. 15: "I promised to travel to Rome, [. . .] the threshold of Peter, prince of the apostles, whose church is distinguished as the founder of evangelical authority."



statement which, since Pippin died in 714 before Gregory became Pope, is clearly spurious.<sup>120</sup> Moreover Gregory is said to have bestowed on Corbinian the *pallium* at this time, although this was not common practice at the time.<sup>121</sup> Both parts of the story would appear to be attempts to put Corbinian at least on a par with Boniface and, since this was all supposed to have happened before Boniface had even reached the continent, Boniface's achievement would have been greatly diminished.<sup>122</sup> It is even possible to detect loose parallels between the *Vita Corbiniani* and the *Vita Bonifatii* in the sections on Rome.<sup>123</sup> Arbeo did more than just challenge the memory of Boniface through these measures; by their very nature, Arbeo was buying into the Bonifatian ideal of sanctity, even if he was doing so on his own terms.<sup>124</sup> The power of Bonifatian-papal authority as embodied in the *Vita Bonifatii* had therefore forced a change — or at least strengthening — in Bavarian perceptions of episcopal authority and sanctity, which in turn found their expression through *vitae*.

The Anglo-Saxon–Bavarian dialogue of saints' Lives that has been discussed by Ian Wood can perhaps be extended further in the Bavarian context. It should be remembered that Arbeo was writing between 769 and 772, in other words before the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldis* which dates from c. 778.<sup>125</sup> The previous chapter demonstrated how Hygeburg attempted to dismiss Arbeo's claims about the development of the *Regula s. Benedicti* in Bavaria;<sup>126</sup> it may also be no coincidence that it was after Arbeo's comments about Emmeram, Corbinian, and Rome that the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldis* was written including the strongest expression of the Anglo-Saxon veneration for Rome in a contemporary *vita*. Willibald was named in Virgil of Salzburg's *Necrologica*, so there may have been personal links between

<sup>120</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, cc. 5–7: '(5) [...] ad summum maiorem domui qui fuerat Pippinum pervenisset [...] (6) tunc demum inhians consilium, ad Romam orationis studio ire decrevit et ibidem apostolici doctrinae commendasse vel eius exortatione [...] (7) Oratione apostolorum facta principis Petri, ad beatae memoriae Gregorii pape se contulit plantis'.

<sup>121</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, c. 9: 'Recepto palleo cum sanctiones beati principis apostolorum Petri.'

<sup>122</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 157–58.

<sup>123</sup> Krusch, MGH SRG, 16, p. 139 and notes to cc. 8–10, pp. 196–98. These are, as Ian Wood pointed out (*Missionary Life*, p. 166, n. 145), hardly convincing individually but are quite convincing when taken together.

<sup>124</sup> Palmer, 'Frankish Cult of Martyrs'.

<sup>125</sup> On the dating of Arbeo's *vitae*, see Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 156–57.

<sup>126</sup> Chapter 5, pp. 190–92.

Arbeo and the Anglo-Saxon.<sup>127</sup> Towards the end of the eighth century there were also strong ties between Alcuin and Arn of Salzburg.<sup>128</sup> There is, of course, no inherent contradiction between the developing Bavarian historical traditions surrounding Salzburg, Freising, and Regensburg and the story of the Anglo-Saxon foundation of Eichstätt; they even complemented each other enough for Freising to preserve Hygeburg's *vita*. But in the same way that Hygeburg's claims about Willibald and the *Regula s. Benedicti* in Bavaria suggested that whatever had been in place beforehand had been far from perfect, the impression of the papal support offered to Willibald reinforced that the Anglo-Saxons were claiming to have reformed the Bavarian Church on precisely the same grounds — Rome and Benedictinism — on which Arbeo was arguing the Church had been founded.

### Pirmin and Rome

A further *vita* that portrayed a saint in the Bonifatian model was the ninth-century *Vita Pirmini* (818x880). Pirmin (d. 753) was a strict contemporary of Boniface, and their careers bear comparison although they appear to have moved in different circles.<sup>129</sup> Their fields of work, for example, were quite different with Pirmin working more in Alemannia. He founded monasteries at Murbach, Hornbach, and Reichenau — the last of which a centre that played an important role in the early dissemination of the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>130</sup> The *Vita Pirmini*'s claim that Pirmin met Boniface towards the end of their lives has been met with general scepticism.<sup>131</sup> There is little in Pirmin's work that suggests any strong connection with Rome. The *Vita*, however, does claim that Pirmin visited Gregory II to obtain papal backing.<sup>132</sup> The

<sup>127</sup> *Monumenta necrologica monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis*, p. 26. There is, at least, a 'Uuillipald ep[iscopu]s' listed there alongside Lull.

<sup>128</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 84–86.

<sup>129</sup> On Pirmin and Boniface, see Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini*; Angenendt, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius'. From the 1200th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, but now a little dated, see also Mayer, 'Bonifatius und Pirmin'.

<sup>130</sup> The second earliest copy of the *Vita Bonifatii* is Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 136, produced by Reginbert, the librarian of Reichenau in the first half of the ninth century. A similar manuscript, now lost, is listed in the ninth-century library catalogue of St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 728, p. 15.

<sup>131</sup> *Vita Pirmini*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), cc. 9–10; Angenendt, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius'. For a less sceptical view, see Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, p. 204.

<sup>132</sup> *Vita Pirmini*, c. 4: 'ab apostolico per praedictum imperata fuerunt'.

closeness of the *Vita Pirmini* to the *Vita Bonifatii* in this respect is intriguing given the differences between the two saints.<sup>133</sup> Pirmin, it seems, provides a further case where a saint has been made more like Boniface in order to underline his authority as a saintly figure. The *Vita Pirmini* was written sometime between 815 and 880 which, while hardly narrowing anything down, potentially locates the text in the same timeframe as the East Frankish *vitae* about Sualo, Burchard, and Kilian.<sup>134</sup> There are differences in the absence of references to Carolingians; while, for example, the *Vita Burchardi* had anachronistically called Pippin *rex*, the author of the *Vita Pirmini* referred more accurately to events happening ‘in diebus Theoterici regis Francorum’.<sup>135</sup> Hornbach’s monks had not incorporated their Carolingian patrons into their ideal of the past, but the independent traditions of the Anglo-Saxons and Rome did offer an ideal to which the monks could aspire.<sup>136</sup>

### Sualo, Burchard, and Kilian

The image of Boniface and Rome was developed in increasingly spurious ways in the East Frankish *vitae* about Sualo, Kilian, and Burchard. In order to understand these distortions it is necessary to contextualize the *vitae* properly. The *Sermo Sualonis*, *Passio minor Kiliani*, and *Vita antiquior Burchardi* all post-date the divisions of the 840s.<sup>137</sup> Ermenrich, who wrote the *Sermo Sualonis*, had been a pupil of Rudolf of Fulda (to whom the *Sermo* was dedicated) and Bishop Gozbert of Würzburg.<sup>138</sup> Both Gozbert and Ermenrich had connections with Passau, the only Bavarian see

<sup>133</sup> Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 63–64.

<sup>134</sup> For the dating of the *Vita Pirmini*, see Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 63.

<sup>135</sup> *Vita Pirmini*, c. 1: ‘in the days of Theoderic, king of the Franks’.

<sup>136</sup> Whether Hornbach’s lack of interest in the Carolingians stemmed from the lack of royal support granted the monastery or not is, unfortunately, difficult to ascertain.

<sup>137</sup> For the traditional datings of the *VBurch* and *SS*, see Klüppel, ‘Die Germania’, pp. 173 and 182. For the more complicated issue of dating the *Passio minor Kiliani*, see Goetz, ‘Die Viten des hl. Kilian’, pp. 287–88. Much hinges on whether a reference to Pippin III as *rex orientalium Francorum* is an anachronism arising after Louis the German was made king over East Frankia.

<sup>138</sup> See the dedicatory letter to the *SS*, pp. 155–56, and Ermenrich, *Epistola*, c. 30. On the career of Gozbold, see Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg*, I, 42–46. On Ermenrich, see Heinz Löwe, ‘Ermenrich von Passau, Gegner des Methodius: Versuch eines Persönlichkeitsbildes’, *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde*, 126 (1986), 221–41, and Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 176–78.

not to have produced traditions to contradict the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>139</sup> They also worked closely with King Louis the German who, in the early 840s, was engaged in a series of struggles with Emperor Lothar, his brother.<sup>140</sup> It may prove important to bear this political context in mind when interpreting aspects of the texts. If a mid- to late date is accepted for the *Passio minor Kiliani* then it too belongs in the context of Würzburg following Carolingian in-fighting. Finally, the tenth-century *Vita antiquior Burchardi* provides further reflections from Würzburg on sanctity and papal authority.

Ermenrich's *Sermo Sualonis* perhaps presented the most distorted image of Boniface and the papacy. Boniface, Ermenrich claimed against the evidence of the letters, never had contempt for the papacy.<sup>141</sup> Less explicably, Ermenrich claimed Boniface was given archiepiscopal authority by Pope Leo III, pope from 795 to 816.<sup>142</sup> Leo was the pope who had raised Charlemagne to the status of emperor in 800.<sup>143</sup> It seems implausible that Ermenrich could have made a genuine mistake about the chronology of two of the most famous figures in the Frankish history of the previous century, especially as a monk brought up in Hrabanus Maurus's Fulda. Rudolf, Ermenrich's teacher, had written a more factually correct (if still idealized) account of Boniface and the papacy only a couple of years earlier.<sup>144</sup> If the mistake was deliberate, however, it had the effect of giving Boniface the same source for his authority as Charlemagne; perhaps the ways in which the Carolingians' own historical traditions had affected the past were idealized in the Bonifatian heartlands. While Ermenrich was writing, the Frankish Empire was strained by civil war and consequently the idea of *imperium* was threatened. Moreover Ermenrich wanted to become a missionary and for that he needed support. Perhaps in the 'error gravissimus' (as Oswald Holder-Egger called it) of giving Leo a role in Boniface's

<sup>139</sup> Gozbert appears to have been a *chorepiscopus* at Passau (*Monumenta necrologica monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis*, p. 26; Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg*, I, 44) and Ermenrich was Bishop of Passau 866–75: see Löwe, 'Ermenrich von Passau, Gegner Methodius'.

<sup>140</sup> For a convenient account of the civil war, see Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), pp. 105–39.

<sup>141</sup> Ermenrich, *SS*, c. 1: '[Bonifatius] ne per imperiale praeceptum contempneretur sedis apostolicae privilegium'.

<sup>142</sup> Ermenrich, *SS*, c. 1: '[Bonifatius] Romam adiit; ibique a viro apostolico domno Leone accepta archiepiscopalis auctoritate'.

<sup>143</sup> *ARF*, s.a. 801; Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 28.

<sup>144</sup> Rudolf of Fulda, *Miracula sanctorum*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SS, 15 (Hannover, 1887), c. 1.

life, Ermenrich was emphasizing the unity of empire and mission. Certainly his later actions as Bishop of Passau, when he led a delegation to the Bulgars in the 860s to stop Byzantine influences, suggest that he thought highly of a bond between politics and conversion.

The *Passio minor Kiliani* stands as possibly the earliest of this East Frankish group of *vitae* and it too contains a curious image of the papacy. The story of Kilian, also retold by the author of the *Vita antiquior Burchardi* in an extended *passio*, bridges the textual gap between the *vitae* of Boniface's heirs and the legends about Sualo and Burchard. While in Würzburg Kilian announced a desire to visit Rome, saying:

Visitemus limina sanctorum principis apostolorum et presentemus nos optutibus beati papae Iohannis et si Domini volentes sit, ab apostolica sede accepta licentia.<sup>145</sup>

When he arrived in Rome Kilian found that John IV had died and the equally short-lived Conon had replaced him. The new Pope approved of Kilian and granted the *licentia*.<sup>146</sup> It is unclear, however, why Kilian would have sought papal authority when only Willibrord of his near-contemporaries had done likewise. The reference to the otherwise unremarkable popes John and Conon perhaps indicates a kernel of truth; it is hard to imagine why anyone would invent such a story based around them (and indeed the longer *passio* omits John altogether).<sup>147</sup> The verbal borrowings from the *Vita Bonifatii* and the Bonifatian correspondence give a Bonifatian feel to the whole account.<sup>148</sup> The author of the *Passio* claimed that the cult of Kilian was promoted by Boniface, Burchard, Pippin, and Pope Zacharias, a comment which might have laid the groundwork for the distortions of the *Vita Burchardi* and again emphasizes the unity between secular, episcopal, and papal power.<sup>149</sup> The earliest manuscript tradition of the *Passio* also places it alongside the

<sup>145</sup> *Passio minor Kiliani*, c. 4: 'We will visit the threshold of the prince of the saintly apostles and present ourselves to the most blessed Pope John [IV] and, if the Lord desires it, receive licence [to preach] from the apostolic see.' This borrows from Zacharias, *Die Briefe*, no. 80: 'Sacris liminibus beati apostolorum principis Petri et nostri obtutibus presentatus presens Burghart.' See also *Passio maior Kiliani*, c. 4 (c. 3).

<sup>146</sup> *Passio minor Kiliani*, c. 5. The longer *passio* (c. 4 (c. 3)) here mentions that the Irish had once been damned by the papacy over Pelagianism, but that such things were now forgiven.

<sup>147</sup> Knut Schäferdiek, 'Kilian von Würzburg: Gestalt und Gestaltung eines Heiligen', in *Iconologia Sacra*, ed. by Keller and Staubach, pp. 313–40 (p. 328). On John IV, see *Liber pontificalis*, 84, ed. by Duchesne, pp. 205–06, and on Conon, see *Liber pontificalis*, 85, ed. by Mommsen, pp. 207–09.

<sup>148</sup> Schäferdiek, 'Kilian von Würzburg', p. 329.

<sup>149</sup> *Passio minor Kiliani*, c. 15, p. 728.

*Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* and Hygeburg's descriptions of papal authority.<sup>150</sup> It is not clear that papal authority had any practical relevance to the author of the *Passio* because Würzburg's missionary work was a Carolingian, not papal, venture.<sup>151</sup> It does seem that in East Frankia, as in Bavaria, a cultural legacy of the Anglo-Saxons was that an association between saints and Rome could enhance the authority of that saint in response to the uncertainties of the mid-ninth century.

Finally, the *Vita antiquior Burchardi* displays further historical distortions in order to transmit papal authority through a saint. The author claims that Pippin sent Burchard to Rome with Boniface.<sup>152</sup> Once there, the story goes, Boniface was given authority over the German neophytes (*neofiti*) by Pope Zacharias. The Pope then suggested to Boniface that he divide the mission field, quoting Paul's epistle to the Galatians: 'Bear ye one another's burdens so you can fulfil the law of Christ.'<sup>153</sup> Boniface proposed to Zacharias that Würzburg would be a suitable location for a second base and Burchard a suitable bishop; he then had Burchard brought before the Pope, and Zacharias invested the Mercian with the *infula* in order to confirm his appointment.<sup>154</sup> The whole story is a blatant fabrication. It conflates two different events: firstly the consecration of Burchard in *Germania* by Boniface in 743, and secondly Burchard's visit to Rome in 748 to take letters from Boniface to Pope Zacharias.<sup>155</sup> These two events are attested by letters in the Boniface correspondence and show that Burchard neither travelled to Rome with Boniface nor was consecrated there by the Pope. Würzburg had waned in missionary importance with the construction of Paderborn, the Saxon *urbs Karoli*, which itself had strong papal connections.<sup>156</sup> It is unlikely that the bishops of Würzburg were particularly interested in reviving claims over mission fields per se; rather, it

<sup>150</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 4585.

<sup>151</sup> Schäferdiek, 'Kilian von Würzburg', p. 328.

<sup>152</sup> *VBurch*, cc. 3–4.

<sup>153</sup> *VBurch*, c. 3: 'Alter alterius portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi' (Gal. 6. 2).

<sup>154</sup> *VBurch*, c. 4: 'Veruntatem venerabilis praesul Bonifatius Burchardum in medium deducens, coepit illum dignis laudibus prosequi, dicens, hunc iuvenili aetate ab occidulis partibus advenisse secumque usque ad perfectam aetatem degentem, se nihil in eo reperisse, quod pontificali officio videatur contraire, ac per hoc se illum pontificali infula credere dignum'. An *infula* was, like the *pallium*, a white woollen garment worn to denote episcopal authority.

<sup>155</sup> *Die Briefe*, nos 53 and 80.

<sup>156</sup> *Translatio s. Liborii*, cc. 4–5, hinting at Paderborn's eclipse of Würzburg. For the commemoration of Leo III's visit to Paderborn in 799, see 799: *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Steigemann and Wemhoff.

was through the missionary past that the bishops of Würzburg had taken papal authority to Thuringia. Sanctity and papal authority worked together in hagiographical narratives as a legitimizing strategy for the present.

### Rome in Frisian and Saxon Representations of Mission

Hagiographical traditions in Frisia and Saxony also manipulated the Anglo-Saxon connection with the papacy to convey something about saints' cults in the North. The influence of Bonifatian traditions was strong in the region, and the martyr was the primary focus of Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* and the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. This veneration was at the expense of celebrating the many missionaries who had worked in the region before Boniface, such as Willibrord.<sup>157</sup> It does not appear that early hagiographical traditions about Rome from Frisia were directly influenced by any Anglo-Saxon-produced *vitae*. Any acceptance of Anglo-Saxon ideas there must be seen as coming from three other sources: firstly, Willibrord and Boniface had obviously done much to establish Christianity in the region and they taught many of the next generation of Christians there;<sup>158</sup> secondly, Liudger had travelled to York to be educated by Alcuin and later travelled to Rome himself;<sup>159</sup> and thirdly, it is evident that at least St Martin's in Utrecht had obtained a copy of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>160</sup> This by no means exhausts the total possibilities. It was Pippin who directed Willibrord towards Rome so Frankish influence is part of the panorama. There was also a *schola Frisianorum* outside St Peter's by at least 799 which may owe its existence to mercantile activities and which may predate the Frankish *schola*.<sup>161</sup> Any Anglo-Saxon influence on the Frisian and Saxon churches when it came to Rome and sanctity was adapted, as we would now expect, in order to fulfil the different needs of the ninth-century frontier.

Liudger's account of Boniface's relationship with the papacy bears little relation to events as retold elsewhere. He rearranged the chronology of Boniface's life so that the future martyr only visited the papacy towards the end of his life, accompanied

<sup>157</sup> Palmer, 'Frankish Cult of Martyrs', pp. 331–32. On the Frisian mission field before the Anglo-Saxons, see Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganization', p. 457.

<sup>158</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 10; Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 4–6.

<sup>159</sup> Altfrid, *VLger*, I. 11–12.

<sup>160</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 6; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 103.

<sup>161</sup> Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs*, I, 25; Rudolf Schieffer, 'Charlemagne and Rome', in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West*, ed. by Smith, pp. 279–96 (pp. 292–93).



by Gregory of Utrecht.<sup>162</sup> There is deliberateness in this distortion: it places the visit exactly halfway through Liudger's text and marks the transition between Boniface and Gregory as focal points for the *vita*. Much is made of the honours Boniface received in Rome and how he prostrated (*prosternere*) himself before Pope Gregory III, symbolizing his subservience and devotion to St Peter. The second half of the text then starts with Gregory of Utrecht returning from Rome with 'many volumes of sacred scripture' ('plura volumina sanctorum Scripturarum'), symbolizing that he was now himself the agent for St Peter in the North.<sup>163</sup> Through his reimagining of the past Liudger created stronger ties between the memory of Boniface and Frisia, emphasizing the continuity between the Anglo-Saxon missionary past and what had followed. Key to that creation again was the authority of Rome.

In the *Vita altera Bonifatii* the authority of the papacy was expressed simply by recounting how Boniface had wanted to be a missionary in Frisia and how he had received papal dispensation to do so on his three visits.<sup>164</sup> On the first visit Boniface sought, and received, no more than 'a certain kindness' ('quidem benedictionem') from the Pope, despite having visited Rome after a premonitory vision.<sup>165</sup> On the second visit, however, Boniface did discuss missionary work ('evangelica doctrina').<sup>166</sup> The third visit, meanwhile, presents a link between preaching and the papacy as the champion of orthodoxy, suggesting that part of the importance of Boniface's memory stood in opposition to heresy in Frisia.<sup>167</sup> Throughout Boniface was not presented as subordinate to the papacy as he had been in Willibald's *vita*; indeed in the *Vita altera Bonifatii* Boniface even tells Pope Gregory III why the German mission is important in a manner which places the impetus firmly with the Anglo-Saxon. Nonetheless Rome and the papacy are a symbolic part of Boniface's career as an official institution that supports Boniface's decision, firstly, to be on the continent, then to be a missionary, and finally to be a defender of orthodoxy. The papacy alone had significance beyond the saints for the conversion of Frisia. The *Vita altera Bonifatii* in general attests to traditions from Frisia independent of

<sup>162</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 7.

<sup>163</sup> Liudger, *VG*, c. 8.

<sup>164</sup> *VaB*, cc. 7, 10, 11.

<sup>165</sup> *VaB*, c. 7.

<sup>166</sup> *VaB*, c. 10.

<sup>167</sup> *VaB*, c. 11: 'Verum qui didicerat a Spiritu sancto et loquebatur mysteria, non habebat necesse ullis orthodoxi ingenii argumentis amplius erudiri.'

Mainz, Carolingian, or Bavarian traditions;<sup>168</sup> likewise when it comes to describing the authority of the papacy through Boniface, the St Martin's priest covers a well-worn theme from his own distinctive point of view.

By contrast the Saxon traditions of Hamburg-Bremen put much greater importance on united papal and Carolingian authority, more in keeping with East Frankish traditions to the south. This may stem in part from the character of Charlemagne's subjugation of the region. Henry Mayr-Harting has suggested that, among other reasons that circulated more explicitly, Charlemagne justified his authority over the Saxons through the imperial title in 800.<sup>169</sup> The *Vita Willehadi* (c. 845) integrated the *translatio imperii* — the translation of the imperial title from the Greeks to Charlemagne under the alleged aegis of Pope Leo III in 800 — into its narrative.<sup>170</sup> This story, in the context of Willehad's career, had the effect of binding together the conversion and Christianization of the Saxons with the papal-sponsored imperial office.<sup>171</sup> The author of the *Vita Willehadi*, perhaps more than the St Martin's priest, put little emphasis on the papacy as a driving force behind missionary work. Willehad had visited Rome himself, like a good Anglo-Saxon, in order to pray for the conversion of the Saxons to St Peter when times were hard due to the persecutions of Christians in the region.<sup>172</sup> Pope Hadrian, the story continues, consoled Willehad, and the missionary was able to return to the Franks in high spirits. Here it is perhaps significant that praying to St Peter elicited a response from the Pope to help the resolve of Willehad in the mission field. The figure of Boniface can be seen in the background because Willehad was said to have begun his missionary work at Dokkum to establish the saint as a successor to Boniface.<sup>173</sup>

Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* (c. 870) portrayed St Anskar of Hamburg-Bremen (d. 865) as a Bonifatian figure in the way he derived authority from the papacy.<sup>174</sup> Anskar became involved in the ninth-century missions to Scandinavia at the court

<sup>168</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 104.

<sup>169</sup> Mayr-Harting, 'Charlemagne'. See however the argument of Collins, 'Charlemagne's Coronation', that it was the absence of a male emperor in Byzantium which was the primary justification cited at Charlemagne's court, at least early on.

<sup>170</sup> *VWbad*, c. 5. Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 28, claimed that the imperial coronation was the Pope's idea and Charlemagne resisted it, but it is more likely that the elevation was more orchestrated than that.

<sup>171</sup> Ehlers, 'Die Sachsenmission'.

<sup>172</sup> *VWbad*, c. 7.

<sup>173</sup> *VWbad*, c. 2.

<sup>174</sup> Wood, 'Christians and Pagans'; Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*'.

of Louis the Pious in 826 when he was sent to accompany Harald Klak back to Denmark. Describing a later journey to Rome Rimbert, Anskar's favourite pupil and successor, wrote:

Quod etiam ipse tam decreti sui auctoritate quam etiam palii datione more praedecessorum legatum in omnibus circumquaque gentibus Sueonum sive Danorum necnon etiam Sclavorum [...] et ante corpus et confessionem sancti Petri apostoli publicam evangelizandi tribuit auctoritatem.<sup>175</sup>

Several aspects of this quotation invite comparisons with Boniface. It is notable that the pope bestowing the *pallium* had become a custom (*mos*) in papal dealings with the Frankish Church since the days of Willibrord and Boniface. Anskar's appointment as a missionary legate also has echoes of Boniface's position amongst the *Germani*. Finally, the Chapel of the Confession of St Peter was given as the location in which Boniface himself had received his papal commission. In terms of *mores*, Anskar was clearly Boniface's predecessor, if only in literary terms.<sup>176</sup> The *Vita Anskarii* cannot simply be taken as a factual account of what happened. Rimbert's work is full of distortions, half-truths, omissions, and fanciful storytelling that serve to justify the possibly imaginary status of Hamburg-Bremen as a unified archbishopric and, at the same time, promote missionary work in Scandinavia.<sup>177</sup> Anskar, and consequently Rimbert as his pupil, cannot have been unaware of the kind of ideals Boniface stood for as a saint because he had himself joined in the solemnities of the Feast of St Boniface at Fulda.<sup>178</sup> Here, in the new mission

<sup>175</sup> Rimbert, *VA*, c. 13: 'The pope confirmed this, not only by authoritative decree, but also by the gift of the *pallium*, in accordance with the custom [*mos*] of his predecessors, and he appointed [Anskar] legate for the time being amongst all the neighbouring races of the Swedes and Danes and also the Slavs [...]. At the tomb of confession of the holy apostle St Peter [Gregory IV] publicly committed [Anskar] to evangelize these races.'

<sup>176</sup> The comparison is not made explicitly, but then Rimbert omits mention of Willehad as Anskar's predecessor too, perhaps so as not to deflect from the image of Anskar as a saint. The one direct comparison is with St Martin; see Rimbert, *VA*, c. 35.

<sup>177</sup> On the status of Hamburg-Bremen, Richard Drögereit denied it was a unified ninth-century archbishopric in his 'Erzbistum Hamburg, Hamburg-Bremen oder Erzbistum Bremen?', *Archiv für Diplomatik*, 21 (1975), 136–230, but this has been comprehensively refuted in Walter Seegrün, *Das Erzbistum Hamburg in seinen älteren Papsturkunden* (Cologne, 1976) and Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg*. The confusion has arisen out of the layers of forgery that have shaped the Hamburg-Bremen sources. On Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* as missionary propaganda, see Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*'.

<sup>178</sup> *Epistolarum Fuldensium fragmenta*, ed. by Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp., 5 (Berlin, 1899), c. 37: 'Bonifatii festum Nonis Iunii celebrat Theoto abbas Fuldensis: quo die ad se invitat Adalgarium abbatem sancti Viti et Ansgarium in epistolar sua ad eosdem.'

fields of the later ninth century, it seems possible that the hagiographical images of Boniface and the papacy had inspired new expressions of papal authority in the North.<sup>179</sup> Moreover these ideals were expressed through the medium of a *vita* in order to establish in part the authority of Anskar as a saint, much as Willibald had done for Boniface a century earlier.

### *Conclusion*

Representations of the Anglo-Saxon missions created an ideal which linked saints to the apostolic authority of Rome. There is a noticeable shift from a simple Merovingian interest in St Peter and the churches of Rome towards a stronger feeling that the popes were significant figures. Hagiography was central. If Willibald and Hygeburg were simply extending the Roman ideals of their hagiographical subjects, they nevertheless repackaged such thoughts for a popular audience: the connections between Bonifatian mission and the papacy were as much to do with the telling of the story as the actions of Boniface and those around him. Thus the image of Boniface and Rome became a popular motif to imitate. This could be done competitively, as in the case of the works of Arbeo, or imitatively, as in the case of a saint like Pirmin. In these divergent attitudes to Boniface, it becomes clear that a new paradigm had been established for creating episcopal saints in relation to papal authority. Saints now did not just derive their *potentia* from their pious lifestyles or political factionalism, but also from the ways in which they exercised power as expressed through centralized ecclesiastical infrastructures.

The wider context for the idealized images of sanctity and papal authority suggest that things were not as simple as the old view of the Anglo-Saxons bringing veneration for Rome to the Franks. There was Frankish interest in the papacy before the missions, and even if it was limited overall, it coincided with groups like the Pippinids and Agilolfings whose power was coincidentally in the ascendancy. It has become accepted to an extent that the Anglo-Saxon missions contributed to an amplification of existing sentiment. Where their influence on veneration for the papacy was strongest was, unsurprisingly, areas like Thuringia and Frisia where episcopal organization was at its most embryonic. From the perspective of centres lacking quite the same Anglo-Saxon influence — say in Aquitaine — different forces affected relationships with the papacy. One caveat to that is that some

<sup>179</sup> This is less clear in hagiography from more central and established Saxon centres like Paderborn and Herferd, less engaged in the mission field.

people perceived the Anglo-Saxons to have a special relationship with Rome. The Lombard Paul the Deacon (d. c. 799), for example, looked to Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* and *Chronica maiora* for examples of pro-papal behaviour;<sup>180</sup> but at the same time he did not cite examples like Willibrord or Boniface to illustrate a spread of influence to the continent. If we are to identify where Anglo-Saxon influence was broadest with regards to Rome, it is in the development of hagiographical discourse and reimagined pasts which made papal authority central to missionary activity.

<sup>180</sup> Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, and *Vita Gregorii papae*, ed. by Walter Stuhl-fath, *Gregor I. Der Grosse: Sein Leben bis zur seinem Wahl zum Papste nebst einer Untersuchung der ältesten Viten*, Heidelberger Abhandlungen zur mittleren und neueren Geschichte, 39 (Heidelberg, 1913). Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 417; Donald A. Bullough, 'Ethnic History and the Carolingians: An Alternative Reading of Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*', in *The Inheritance of Historiography 350–900*, ed. by Christopher Holdsworth and T. P. Wiseman (Exeter, 1986), pp. 85–105.



## THE WORLD BEYOND

The world of the Anglo-Saxon missions was framed by the distant lands of the imperial and biblical East. Rome and Monte Cassino proved for many to be the furthest they would travel from their homeland; no Anglo-Saxon in this period had any influence on affairs of the Greeks or the Arabs. Yet the importance of the East was in many ways paramount. Around Jerusalem were the lands described in the Gospels, while around Constantinople was the still-functioning centre of the Roman Empire. The significance of the East was brought home vividly in the experiences of Willibald, whose peregrinations in the 720s took him through the Holy Land in the years after Arab invasion and through the shrinking Byzantine Empire when the Iconoclasm debate had begun to tear the eastern and western Churches further apart; his travels became the very embodiment of universality in a fragmented world.<sup>1</sup> Combined with the *Vita Bonifatii* and the story of Wynnebald in the early manuscript tradition, the account of Willibald's pilgrimage brought the world beyond Frankia within the concepts of the Anglo-Saxon missions.<sup>2</sup> In this final chapter we will examine how the meaning of distant lands and events could be brought to bear on a community shaped by the Anglo-Saxons.

Modern historians have tended to see Willibald's journey and the account of it as little more than interesting historical curiosities. In their seminal studies of the Anglo-Saxon missions to the continent, neither Levison nor Schieffer afforded Willibald's journey much space, because for the most part it fell outside the scope

<sup>1</sup> Claudio Leonardi, 'Modelli agiografici nel secolo VIII: da Beda a Ugeburga', in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (III<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome, 149 (Rome, 1991), pp. 506–16 (pp. 515–16).

<sup>2</sup> On Boniface himself as someone who expanded horizons, see Rudolf Schieffer, 'Der Gottesmann aus Übersee: Die christliche Botschaft öffnet eine große Welt', *AmKg*, 57 (2005), 11–23.



of their work.<sup>3</sup> Neither the pilgrimage nor the account of it seemed to have much significance to the history of Germany.<sup>4</sup> Often Willibald's travels are dismissed as little more than an extension of Anglo-Saxon *peregrinatio* in general,<sup>5</sup> an interpretation which, while true to an extent, runs the risk of losing sight of the distinctiveness of both the pilgrimage and the *vita*. A fundamental problem with interpreting the *Vita Willibaldi* within past frameworks of historical enquiry is that it provides information so out of character with the rest of the evidence for the Anglo-Saxons' activities that it does not appear to fit within the story of the Christianization of Germany. In other pertinent fields of research a similar uneasiness with the source is discernable. Historians of medieval pilgrimage, for example, tend to refer to Willibald as an isolated example of early pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but in doing so pay no attention to the form of the source itself.<sup>6</sup> To historians of the rising Islamic East, meanwhile, Willibald's journey has appeared as little more than an aberration, a blip in an otherwise widespread Western lack of interest in the Holy Land at the time.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm Levison, in his *England and the Continent*, wrote, 'There is no need to relate here the details of [Willibald's] journey, his dangers, hardship and adventures in Greek and Moslem countries' (p. 43). He described the account as 'mainly concerned [...] with places of devotion, biblical or legendary events, churches and tombs of saints' (pp. 43–44) and added that it illustrates 'something of the curiosity of the explorer' (p. 44). See also Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> See also the cursory reference to the *Vita Willibaldi* in Ian Wood's *Missionary Life*, p. 64. In von Padberg's *Mission und Christianisierung* the focus on Willibald is entirely on his family, for example on pp. 89–90, and there is no real mention of the pilgrimage.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Angenendt, 'Die irische Peregrinatio', p. 76.

<sup>6</sup> The classic study of medieval pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Jonathan Sumption's *Pilgrimage*, barely considers Willibald, mentioning him only in passing in connection with trade because the saint smuggled some oil out of the Middle East. The most recent work on pilgrimage, Diana Webb's *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, does give Willibald's journey more prominence, although she perhaps takes the *Vita Willibaldi* too much at face value. Some recent articles have studied the route Willibald took in comparison to those used by other medieval pilgrims: Adelbert Davids, 'Routes of Pilgrimage', in *East and West in the Crusader States*, ed. by Krijnie Ciggaar, Adelbert Davids, and Herman Teule, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 75 (Leuven, 1996), pp. 81–101, and Dietrich Claude, 'Spätantike und frühmittelalterliche Orientfahrten: Routen und Reisende', in *Voyages et voyageurs à Byzance et en occident du VI<sup>e</sup> au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. by Alain Dierkens and Jean-Marie Sansterre, *Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège*, 278 (Geneva, 2000), pp. 235–53 (pp. 247–49).

<sup>7</sup> Typical of the opinion of Willibald's journey in historiography on the Middle East is Hugh Kennedy in *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, p. 121. Kennedy makes the point that there is little evidence for European interest in the Islamic Near East or Muslim interest in Europe, and that Hygeburg's narrative offers little to rectify this situation because of its focus on the Holy Places. This is perhaps to be too dismissive of the value of the text as a source for Islam in the eighth

A contextualized study of Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi [et Wynnebaldi]*, its purpose and significance to Eichstätt and Heidenheim, will bring light to a fuller vision of the Anglo-Saxons' work.

It is worth quickly restating the story of Willibald as related by Hygeburg. In 721 he left his West Saxon homeland with his brother and father, hoping to visit the shrines of Rome. The father died on route at Lucca, where his sons buried him. Willibald and Wynnebald continued to their destination, spent four months in the Eternal City, and then went their separate ways in March 722, Willibald heading to the Holy Land with new companions, and Wynnebald returning home to Wessex, where he remained until a second visit to Rome in the late 730s. Willibald spent four years in the Holy Land visiting important biblical sites and the burial sites of numerous saints. He was detained twice by Muslim authorities, once simply for being a stranger unable to communicate with his captors, and the second time for attempting to smuggle oil out of the country. By 727 his extensive travels had taken him to Constantinople, where he spent two further years visiting holy places. After arriving back in Italy, he entered the monastery of Monte Cassino in 730 and spent ten years there before following his brother to work in Bavaria under Boniface. The work in Bavaria is described in little depth, but we know the death of Wynnebald in 760 and the translation of his body in 776 provided important moments when the communities of Eichstätt and Heidenheim under Willibald celebrated their saintly heritage. Willibald himself died in 787, one of the last of the great Anglo-Saxon missionaries (only Willehad, d. 789, worked later). His unusually broad experiences helped to establish a sense of the whole Christian world in the heart of the Anglo-Saxon missions.

### *The Production of the Vita Willibaldi*

The story of the production of the *Vita Willibaldi* is one of the most unusual of the early Middle Ages. Hygeburg relates the origins of the work as follows:

century — it does offer some images of what it was like for a visitor to travel in the Holy Land at the time — but the more general point is probably correct. See now also Richard Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent: Christianity and Islam from Muhammad to the Reformation* (London, 2003), pp. 22, 24. On the problematical nature of Islamic historical sources of the period, see Albrecht Noth and Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source Critical Study*, trans. by Michael Bonner (Princeton, 1994); Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge, 2003); and on the archaeological records, see Robert Schick, 'Palestine in the Early Islamic Period: Luxuriant Legacy?', *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 61 (1998), 74–108.

Ista non apocriforum venia erradica dissertatione relata esse cognoscamus, sed sicut illo ipso vidente et nobis referente de ori sui dictatione audire et nihilominus scribere destinavimus, duobus diaconibus testibus mecumque audientibus, 9. Kal. Iulii, pridie ante solstitia, Martii die.<sup>8</sup>

Few other saints' Lives could boast that they had been dictated by the saint himself. From the information about the solstice it is likely that the dictation occurred in 778, following the consecration of Willibald's church in Eichstätt the previous year.<sup>9</sup> But the supposed origin of the work seems to be contradicted by the fullness of detail Willibald gave; Walter Berschin has even suggested that Willibald must have kept some kind of travel diary.<sup>10</sup> There was, therefore, nothing casual in the nature of Willibald's reminiscences. More significantly, there are two distinct Latin styles employed within the *Vita Willibaldi*: much is written in the convoluted style of Aldhelm, in keeping with the Latin of the Bonifatian circle, but the account of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land itself is written in a plainer Latin more like that of the Vulgate.<sup>11</sup> The implications of the use of two written styles — particularly in a work that purports to be written up from a dictation — need to be considered.

A brief illustration of the two Latin styles contained within the *Vita Willibaldi* reveals a peculiar dichotomy. The break appears to happen after the first sentence of the chapter on Willibald's pilgrimage to the Holy Land (Chapter 4, *De transitu Willibaldi*). The first sentence reads,

Postquam ille inluster clarusque Christi crucicolus magna mentis intentione et cordis contemplatione ad superna internis vitae speculatione provide circumspectione proberabat et ad sublimioris rigidioris vitae virtutibus anhelando, iam non planem, sed arctam austerioris vitae viam per monachocalis vite normam inhiando desiderabat et maiorem iam tunc peregrinationis ignotitiam adire optabat, quam illa fuit, in qua tunc stare videbatur; tunc ille strenuus, consilio amicorum contribulumque licentia flagitato, ut suorum opulatione orationum illum sequere dignentur, rogabat, ut tutis cursibus dilectabiles atque

<sup>8</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, pref.: 'We know these things because they were related to us, not by means of the meandering turnings of apocryphal stories, but because having encountered Willibald, we resolved to hear them as told to us in dictation from his own mouth and so to write them down — with two deacons as witnesses who heard them with me — on Tuesday 23 June, the day before summer solstice.'

<sup>9</sup> Ermenrich, *SS*, ed. by Holder-Egger, p. 82, n. 5. It could also fit 767 or 772: Engels, 'Die Vita Willibaldi', p. 172; Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 21–22. On the use of Aldhelmian Latin by Boniface and his circle, see Orchard, *Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, pp. 61–65; Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources'.

optibiles civitatis Hierusalem moenias peragraré specularéque per illorum pia precuum  
presida possibiliter poterit.<sup>12</sup>

This sentence is characteristically Aldhelmian in its unwieldy length and excessive alliteration, particularly in the final few words.<sup>13</sup> This is a style that is used throughout the *Vita Wynnebaldi* and in the *Vita Willibaldi* up until this point in the text. There is then a marked change for much of the rest of the *Vita Willibaldi*, as illustrated by the next four lines:

Cumque, transactis dominice paschalis sollemnibatibus, agile exercitus levavit se cum  
duobus suis sociis, et peregrare ceperunt. Cumque perrexerunt et venerunt usque ad urbem  
Teratinam in oriente, et ibi manebant duos dies; et inde pergentes, venerunt ad urbem  
Gaitam; illa stat in litore maris. Et ibi tunc ascendentes in navem, transfretaverunt ad  
Neabulem. Et illic relicto nave, in quo pergabant, stabant ibi duos ebdomadas.<sup>14</sup>

The style is completely different: each sentence is notably shorter, there is no alliteration, the Latin is simpler in structure, and, in the constant use of ‘et’, ‘tunc’, and ‘inde’, it is highly repetitive. The whole rest of the chapter *De transitu Willibaldi* is written in this simpler style. The fifth chapter, which takes Willibald’s story from Monte Cassino to Eichstätt, mixes Aldhelmian phraseology and alliteration with this simpler style, as if Hygeburg was trying — and failing — to stay within the simpler style of Chapter 4. Finally Chapter 6 sees a full return to the excesses of the earlier portions of the *Vita Willibaldi*. Walter Berschin remarked that ‘Willibald had probably already produced a work like the Journey of Paul, the *Itinerarium* of Egeria or Adomnán’s *De locis sanctis*. Then he gave the work to the learned nun

<sup>12</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4: ‘After this the illustrious bearer of Christ’s cross had continued to pursue the life of perfection with great steadfastness of mind and inward contemplation, and he grew eager to follow a more rigorous life of virtue, not an easier one, but a more austere way of monastic life is what he most desired, and so now Willibald longed to go on pilgrimage to a [more] unknown place than where he then was; so, energetic as ever, he sought the advice of his friends and asked permission from his kinsmen to go so that, he asked, they would deign to follow him with their prayers, so that throughout the course of his journey their prayers would keep him from harm and enable him to reach the city of Jerusalem and gaze upon its pleasant and hallowed walls.’

<sup>13</sup> See the introductions to Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, and Lapidge and Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*. In more depth on Aldhelmian verse, see Orchard, *Poetic Art of Aldhelm*.

<sup>14</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4: ‘So, after the solemnities of Easter were over, the restless soldier set off with two companions and began his journey. So they advanced and came to a town east of Fondi, and stayed there for two days; and then travelling, they came to the city of Gaeta; it stands by the seashore. And then having boarded a ship there, they sailed to Naples. And having left that ship, in which they travelled, they stayed for two weeks.’

Hygeburg, who left the powerful words of Willibald unchanged in essence'.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that Hygeburg edited some of Willibald's text, with the mixed Latin of Chapter 5 representing an effort to blend Willibald's work into a wider piece. One might also note that Hygeburg's account of the origins of the *Vita Willibaldi* is, if not an outright lie, somewhat glossed to give it a new history exclusive to Eichstätt and Heidenheim. The *Vita Willibaldi* is not a single work but an earlier work, Willibald's *Itinerarium*, reset into a longer work, Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*.

When the story of the pilgrimage was incorporated into the *Vita Willibaldi* by Hygeburg, it was entitled *De transitu Willibaldi* and became the fourth of six chapters. This probably happened soon before the preparation of the *Vita Wynnebal-di*, which contains a reference to the 'gesta Willibaldi' having already been set down.<sup>16</sup> References to Willibald in the present tense imply it was written before the Bishop's death in 787, so possibly either in 782 or 786 when the solstice fell on 23 June. Willibald therefore had the distinction of being able to oversee the production of his own *vita*, and maybe hypothetically even had a chance to influence the content beyond the account of the pilgrimage.<sup>17</sup> He may also have influenced Hygeburg's *Vita Wynnebal-di*. The two *vitae* share a preface and are called, in the singular, the *Vita germanuum Willibaldi et Wynnebal-di* in the manuscript traditions, thus creating a single *Doppelbiographie*.<sup>18</sup> The text of Willibald's *Itinerarium* was therefore quickly incorporated into a broader hagiographical context. There was, however, another layer of production to come. Shortly after the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebal-di* had been written it was copied at Eichstätt into the manuscript now known as Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1086.<sup>19</sup> The

<sup>15</sup> Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 21–22: 'Vielleicht hatte Willibald vor, daraus ein Werk wie die Reise der Paula, das *Itinerarium* der Egeria oder Adamnans *De locis sanctis* zu machen. Dann hat er die Ausarbeitung der gelehrten Nonne Hugelburg überlassen, die den Wortlaut Willibalds im wesentlichen unverändert ließ.' On the basis of this conclusion I intend to continue by differentiating between the portions of the *Vita Willibaldi* written by Willibald himself and those written by Hygeburg; thus Willibald's sections will be denoted as his *Itinerarium* (followed by a traditional reference to its place in Hygeburg's *VWill* for orientation), whilst the rest will continue to be referenced as Hygeburg's *VWill*. On the wider geographical traditions Berschin mentions, see Frank, *Memory of the Eyes*, esp. pp. 6–13; Natalia Lozovsky, 'The Earth Is Our Book': *Geographical Knowledge in the Latin West ca. 400–1000* (Ann Arbor, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Compare the case of St Martin: Stancliffe, *St Martin and his Hagiographer*, p. 71.

<sup>18</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, pref. On reading the *vitae* together, see Berschin, *Biographie*, III, 18–19; Engels, 'Die Vita Willibaldi', p. 171, p. 179, p. 185.

<sup>19</sup> Bernhard Bischoff, *Die südostdeutschen Schriebenschulen und Bibliotheken in der Karolingerzeit*, vol. 1: *Die bayerische Diözesen*, 2nd edn (Wiesbaden, 1960), pp. 57, 148.

*Doppelbiographie* — which now placed the *Vita Wynnebaldi* first, contrary to the title and Hygeburg's preface — followed the *Vita Bonifatii* in the manuscript, thus creating an extended hagiographical account of the Anglo-Saxons in Germany.<sup>20</sup>

There are, then, three contexts in which *De transitu Willibaldi* was interpreted: firstly as a stand-alone *itinerarium*, then in the context of the genre of hagiography, and finally as part of the late eighth-century composite memory of the Anglo-Saxon missions represented by Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1086. Only if each layer of production is understood on its own terms can a fuller picture of the meaning of Willibald and his pilgrimage be gleaned.

### *The Recent British History of Travel Writing*

'Travel writing' in the North of the early Middle Ages was chiefly concerned with biblical exegesis.<sup>21</sup> In Britain an important example of this tradition was the *De locis sanctis* of Adomnán, written late in the seventh century in Iona following the reminiscences of the Gallic bishop Arculf.<sup>22</sup> Although it is a text produced hundreds of miles away from Heidenheim a century earlier there are many good reasons to pursue the comparison. The meeting of Irish-Northumbrian culture in Britain had parallels in Bavaria, particularly where *peregrini* worked in monastic scriptoria.<sup>23</sup> Moreover *De locis sanctis* was adapted by Bede (as shall be seen further below), who was an important author for Anglo-Saxons and others on the continent. Culturally, *De transitu Willibaldi* and *De locis sanctis* are not as remote as they may first appear. There are many similar circumstances in the context of their production, and possibly some similar literary strategies employed by the respective authors. Of course differences exist too, so systematic study is needed to determine any justification for claiming similarities and the significance of any contrasts.

Until recently the *De locis sanctis* of Adomnán had, like Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*, been treated as something of a historical curiosity, of no great importance

<sup>20</sup> The significance of the manuscript is hinted at by Patrick Geary in his 'Saints, Scholars and Society', p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Lozovsky, 'The Earth is Our Book', pp. 47–50.

<sup>22</sup> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, ed. by Denis Meehan, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 3 (Dublin, 1958).

<sup>23</sup> Gernot Wieland, 'Anglo-Saxon Culture in Bavaria 739–850', *Humanistica et Mediaevalia*, 17 (1994 for 1991), 177–200. On interaction between the Irish and Anglo-Saxon churches, see Hughes, 'Evidence for Contacts'; Campbell, 'Debt of the Early English Church'.

but with a couple of interesting comments on the Middle East of the seventh century. Then in 1992 Thomas O'Loughlan argued that the text should be understood as work of biblical exegesis with great value to the monks of Iona.<sup>24</sup> In character, *De locis sanctis* is a dry geographical description of the Holy Land which does not offer a narrative (emplotted or sequential) account of Arculf's pilgrimage. The text is divided into three books: the first focuses on Jerusalem; the second on Bethlehem, other nearby sites, and Egypt; and the third and final book describes Constantinople. Adomnán's two main enterprises — in practice often the same concern — were to describe the locations of important biblical sites and churches. These descriptions were often precise and include details such as the size of churches and the lamps which decorated them; often Adomnán included accompanying diagrams to illustrate the layout of particular churches. He purported to have written the text as it was dictated to him by Bishop Arculf, first on wax tablets and then later copied onto parchment.<sup>25</sup> In practice, many details were available to Adomnán from books in the library of Iona, and Arculf's contribution appears to have been limited to incidental details.<sup>26</sup>

There are several features of *De locis sanctis* that reveal it to be more complicated than it has initially seemed to many historians. The simple fact that Adomnán wrote the text is particularly important because he himself reveals that, as abbot, 'ego quamlibet inter laboriosas et prope insustentabiles tota die undique conglobatas ecclesiasticae sollicitudinis occupationes constitutus'.<sup>27</sup> For him to have taken time from these duties to write the text therefore implies that it was of some importance for his community.<sup>28</sup> The majority of the work refers to questions or statements that arise from the Bible. Descriptions of Jerusalem in Book I, for example, bring together and elucidate references to the city and, in so doing, Adomnán helps to explain its status as a symbol for Christian eschatology.<sup>29</sup> Adomnán

<sup>24</sup> Thomas O'Loughlan, 'The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 24 (1992), 37–53; O'Loughlan, 'Adomnán and Arculf: The Case of the Expert Witness', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 7 (1997), 127–46.

<sup>25</sup> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, pref.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas O'Loughlan, 'The Library of Iona in the Late Seventh Century: The Evidence from Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Ériu*, 45 (1994), 33–52, esp. at p. 34; O'Loughlan, 'Adomnán and Arculf', p. 141.

<sup>27</sup> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, III. 6: 'I am beset by laborious and almost insupportable ecclesiastical business from every quarter.'

<sup>28</sup> O'Loughlan, 'Exegetical Purpose', p. 37.

<sup>29</sup> O'Loughlan, 'Exegetical Purpose', pp. 41–42.



also appears to tackle the Synoptic Problem — the intertextuality of the first three Gospels — and difficulties that arise from contradictions within scripture. A description of the location of Rachel's *sepulchrum*, for example, is careful to confirm that it lies to the south of Jerusalem as is claimed in Genesis (35. 19–20), thereby silently dismissing the statement in 1 Samuel (10. 2) that it lay to the north.<sup>30</sup> Adomnán wrote that

Rachel in Effrata, hoc est in regione Bethelm, et liber Geneseos sepultam narrat sed et Locorum liber in eadem regione iuxta uiam humatam refert Rachel. De qua Arculfus via mihi percunctanti respondens ait: Est quidem via regia quae ab Helia contra meridianam plagam Chebron ducti, cui viae Bethelm sex milibus distans ab Hierusolima ab orientali plaga adheret. Sepulchrum vero Rachel in eiusdem viae extremitate ab occidentali parte, hoc est in dextro latere, habetur pergentibus Chebron coherens.<sup>31</sup>

By describing the Holy Places Adomnán was able to clarify certain problems contained within the Bible.

Adomnán's methodology was particularly inspired by Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, in which the great Bishop of Hippo set out what someone would need to know in order to interpret scripture. *De locis sanctis* illustrates two of Augustine's principles: knowledge of what place names mean and knowledge of the places themselves. Augustine believed that sometimes it was only with such knowledge that certain messages within the Bible could be interpreted.<sup>32</sup> But this knowledge was more noble than simple geographical description, it was *narratio* — it relied on experiential knowledge rather than abstract principles learnt from books.<sup>33</sup> In this context, O'Loughlan has argued that Arculf came to be an 'expert witness' in Adomnán's work because it was through his experience that features of the Holy Land were verified.<sup>34</sup> Arculf's distinctive contribution to *De locis sanctis*, however, goes beyond simply adding the occasional detail to those Adomnán had already

<sup>30</sup> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, II. 7; O'Loughlan, 'Exegetical Purpose', p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, II. 7: 'Rachel's sepulchre is in Effrate, which is in the region of Bethlehem, according to the book of Genesis but the *Liber locorum* says Rachel is buried in that region by a road. On asking Arculf about this road he said, "There is a certain royal road which runs from Helia to the middle of the county of Chebron, whose course runs east near Bethlehem six miles from Jerusalem. Truly the sepulchrum of Rachel is on the end of that road by the western part, which is on the right-hand side on the way to Chebron."'

<sup>32</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, ed. by Joseph Martin, CCL, 32 (Turnhout, 1982), II. 16 (23).

<sup>33</sup> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, II. 29 (45); O'Loughlan, 'Adomnán and Arculf', p. 137.

<sup>34</sup> O'Loughlan, 'Adomnán and Arculf', pp. 141–46.

learnt from his library. The Gallic bishop testifies to changing times in the Holy Land, with references to a Saracen *rex* and Muslim *ecclesiae*.<sup>35</sup> Such references are, if anything, designed as comforting additions to Adomnán's text. Arab expansion had seen the fall of Jerusalem in 638 and of Alexandria in 642 and naval attacks on Constantinople between 674 and 677, but within *De locis sanctis* it is made clear by comparison that Christian sites remained rich, powerful, and favoured by God. The arrival of Arculf in Britain might therefore have occasioned the writing of *De locis sanctis* both because he brought home the threat the Muslims posed to the Holy Land as a Christian region and because at the same time he could stand as an expert witness to Christianity's persistence in the Middle East.

The work of Adomnán became known quickly amongst the Anglo-Saxons. Adomnán presented a copy to King Aldfrith of Northumbria (d. 705), who had studied in Ireland in his youth and who also had an interest in cosmographies.<sup>36</sup> Not long afterwards, the venerable Bede obtained a copy of the work and twice adapted it to his own purpose.<sup>37</sup> In the first instance Bede paraphrased *De locis sanctis*. It would seem from some comments he made about the work that he considered Adomnán's prose to be overly elaborate and too confusing for many readers; he thus produced his own version of it in order to make *De locis sanctis* more readily accessible.<sup>38</sup> Bede's efforts in paraphrasing it suggest he also thought that it was useful, just as the fact that Adomnán took the time to write the work in the first place indicates its importance. Bede was an exegete who wrote seventeen treatises on the

<sup>35</sup> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, II. 28 says of Damascus: 'in qua Saracinorum rex adeptus eius principatum regnat [...] et quaedam etiam Saracinorum ecclesia incredulorum et ipsa in eadem ciuitate quam ipsi frequentant fabricata est'. In I. 9, Adomnán relates that the name of the *rex* in the time of Arculf's visit was 'Mauias', a rendering of Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufan, caliph between 660 and 680: see Meehan's introduction, p. 9. There is also mention of a large but unspectacular Muslim temple in Jerusalem (I. 1): 'nunc Saracini quadrangulum orationis domum, quam subrectis tabulis et magnis trabibus super quasdem ruinarum reliquias contruentes uili fabricati sunt opere, ipsi frequentant; quae utique domus tria hominum milia, ut fertur, capere potest'. Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, Studies on Late Antiquity and Early Islam, 13 (Princeton, 1997), pp. 219–23.

<sup>36</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 15; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 42. On the calendar which may have been attached to Aldfrith's *Codex cosmographiorum*, see Meyvaert, 'Discovering the Calendar', pp. 17–25, pp. 36–40.

<sup>37</sup> Bede, *De locis sanctis*, ed. by Iohannes Fraipont, *Itineraria et alia Geographica*, CCSL, 175 (Turnhout, 1965), pp. 251–80.

<sup>38</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 17. See William Trent Foley and Arthur G. Holder, *Bede: A Biblical Miscellany*, Translated Texts for Historians, 28 (Liverpool, 1999), p. 4.

Bible running to many more volumes.<sup>39</sup> It is likely that he recognized the useful exegetical purpose of *De locis sanctis* and was eager for students to use it when understanding scripture.<sup>40</sup> In addition he compiled a list of names of places in Acts to help orientate readers. Without such guides, literal interpretations of scriptural passages would be impossible to people unfamiliar with the Near East.<sup>41</sup>

Bede also inserted part of the text of *De locis sanctis* into his *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>42</sup> Bede's reasoning here is less clear: within the progression of the text, the brief summary of the Holy Places forms a striking digression from the spiritual progression of the *gens Anglorum* specifically and the British Isles in general. Michael Wallace-Hadrill sensibly suggested that it was a device to bring Bede's audience face-to-face with the roots of the Universal Church.<sup>43</sup> Bede was concerned to place the English Church in broader contexts throughout his work, from Roman history onwards. While probably correct, the point could be expanded. It is interesting to note, for example, how Bede treats the *Historia ecclesiastica* as an opportunity to encourage people to read either Arculf's version of *De locis sanctis* or his own.<sup>44</sup> This might in turn imply that Bede hoped the potential wider circulation of the *Historia ecclesiastica* would be a good vehicle for promoting some more obscure texts on Christian understanding. Bede's biographical note that accompanies the *Historia ecclesiastica* and which lists his numerous exegetical and hagiographical works would seem to confirm this suspicion. The list does appear to have been used later by people requesting Bede's treatises.<sup>45</sup>

Bede's new version of *De locis sanctis* did contain one fundamental difference: Arculf's role as 'expert witness' was all but written out. Whereas Adomnán had repeatedly referred back to Arculf's experiences, Bede is rather oblique about his sources in his introduction to the work, does not mention Arculf at all during the text, and reserves his acknowledgement of Adomnán and Arculf until his concluding paragraph.<sup>46</sup> He did, on the other hand, give more details in the *Historia*

<sup>39</sup> Bede lists his own works in the *HE*, V. 24. On Bede as exegete, see Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, pp. 41–87.

<sup>40</sup> Trent Foley and Holder, *Bede*, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Lozovsky, 'The Earth Is Our Book', pp. 48–49; Merrills, *Geography and History*, pp. 242–43.

<sup>42</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 16–17.

<sup>43</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 188.

<sup>44</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 17; Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 60.

<sup>45</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 140 and see further below.

<sup>46</sup> Bede, *De locis sanctis*, 'versus eiusdem' and XVIII. 5, pp. 251 and 280.

*ecclesiastica*.<sup>47</sup> Historical narrative, for example the story of Arculf being shipwrecked in Britain, had no place in Bede's own version of the exegetical work. Bede's *De locis sanctis* is no 'narrative' in terms of 'a chronological story' because of its static surveys, although that does not disbar it from the category of narrative.<sup>48</sup> Experiential *narratio*, such as Arculf's, was better left for a work that could incorporate them into the historical world Bede, Adomnán, and Arculf lived in, namely the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Theology underpinned the kind of history Bede wrote,<sup>49</sup> thus the issue here is about the appropriateness of different rhetorical strategies. The treatment of *De locis sanctis* and Arculf allowed Bede to create overlap between exegesis and history in a way that did not blur the purposes of his two projects. It seems, then, that the Holy Land was to Bede, as to Adomnán, no mere intellectual curiosity.

It is difficult to assess with any certainty whether either Adomnán's or Bede's *De locis sanctis* was known to Willibald or Hygeburg. Although there are similarities in some details about the Holy Land, there are no verbal borrowings from the work in Willibald's narrative and there are also many subtle differences. The earliest extant manuscripts of both versions of *De locis sanctis* are, on the other hand, continental and associated with centres such as Corbie and Freising with which the Anglo-Saxons had contacts.<sup>50</sup> These manuscripts are from no earlier than the ninth century.<sup>51</sup> There remains the possibility that there were earlier exemplars in Germany, but it is impossible to tell where and when they might have been. It might be noted that *De locis sanctis* was not amongst the works of Bede requested from Northumbrian centres by either Boniface or Lull.<sup>52</sup> This does not mean that the missionaries did not want or know the work — they could equally have had a copy

<sup>47</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 15.

<sup>48</sup> Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, I, 155–61.

<sup>49</sup> This is by no means a universal principle in Bede's writings: see Roger D. Ray, 'Bede, the Historian, as Exegete', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. by Bonner, pp. 125–40; Merrills, *Geography and History*, pp. 240–45.

<sup>50</sup> On some possible connections between Boniface and Corbie, see Rosamond McKitterick, 'The Diffusion of Insular Culture in Neustria between 650 and 850: The Implications of the Manuscript Evidence', in *Les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. by Hartmut Atsma, Beihefte der Francia, 16/11 (Sigmaringen, 1989), pp. 395–432 (pp. 412–16).

<sup>51</sup> Fraipont, CCSL, 175, pp. 247–48, 250.

<sup>52</sup> Boniface's requests: *Die Briefe*, nos 75–76, 91; von Padberg, 'Bonifatius und die Bücher', p. 12. Lull's requests: *Die Briefe*, nos 116, 125–27; Palmer, '“Vigorous Rule” of Bishop Lull', pp. 255–58.

already or been sent one when Boniface made his general requests — but it does make it hard to know what interest there was in *De locis sanctis* in eighth-century Germany. Lull did, however, request some *libri cosmografiorum* from York.<sup>53</sup> Levison suggested that Lull was inspired by Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*, a work also employed by Adomnán in *De locis sanctis*.<sup>54</sup> What is perhaps more certain is the presence of copies of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, the inspiration behind Adomnán's original compilation, amongst Boniface's circle. A copy is attested in an eighth-century book list (alongside Bede's *Historia*) associated with Würzburg and perhaps even Megingoz or Burchard.<sup>55</sup> The possibility therefore exists that Hygeburg or Willibald could at least have taken similar inspiration to Adomnán or Bede in compiling their account of Willibald's pilgrimage, if they did not know *De locis sanctis* itself.

### *Willibald's 'Itinerarium' as an Exegetical Tool*

Willibald's *Itinerarium*, like *De locis sanctis*, betrays a form that shapes its material in literary terms rather than presenting a simple, remembered version of the past. There were numerous differences between the production of the two texts: Willibald and Hygeburg were not as busy as Adomnán, and the account was more personal to the author(s) than was Arculf's, as a stranger, to Adomnán. Nonetheless, the timing of the dictation and the subsequent incorporation of the work into a *vita* indicates that it was produced because of more than idle curiosity. That does not necessarily mean Willibald's *Itinerarium* was in part a work of exegesis; one would have to look to see if it did explain anything about the Bible, and in particular those elements that were contradictory or ambiguous. The case of *De locis sanctis* shows us that geographical works can do this quietly: it does not mention that there is a contradiction, but instead states the preferred version of events with apparent authority. It is thus difficult to do more than note where Willibald mentions problematical stories and how he dealt with them in his work.

There are a number of references in the *Itinerarium* which do appear to create renewed certainty about contradictory stories relating to the Bible. Willibald is said

<sup>53</sup> Lull, *Die Briefe*, no. 124.

<sup>54</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 42, n. 2; O'Loughlan, 'Library of Iona', p. 52.

<sup>55</sup> Elias Avery Lowe, 'An Eighth-Century List of Books in a Bodleian Manuscript from Würzburg and its Probable Relation to the Laudian *Acts*', *Speculum*, 3 (1928), 3–15.

to have visited Damascus where the body of St Ananias lay.<sup>56</sup> In Acts 9. 10–19, Ananias received Paul after his conversion on the road to Damascus, but in Galatians 1. 16, Paul wrote that he ‘conferred not with flesh and blood’ for three years after his conversion. Here, then, the presence of Ananias’s body gives weight to his importance, and thus the account in Acts. A deceptively brief statement follows associating Nazareth with where Gabriel said ‘Hail Mary’ (Luke 1. 28). This quietly affirms the statement in Luke that Joseph had been in Nazareth before the nativity, and thus implicitly rejects the statement in Matthew that Joseph entered the city only after Herod’s death.<sup>57</sup> In this case, it is a church on the site that acts as the proof for Willibald. No such evidence is offered in a subsequent reference to Capharnum and how Christ saved the daughter of the local leader Jairus, but again a contradiction is ‘settled’, again in favour of Luke. Mark reports how, when Jairus approached Christ, his daughter was on the verge of death, whereas Luke says that she had died already.<sup>58</sup> Willibald simply makes reference to the account of Luke and ignores that of Mark. Willibald also takes time to explain why the True Cross was found by Helena within the walls of Jerusalem on Mount Calvary, whereas the Gospels seem to indicate the True Cross should be outside those walls:

Et inde venit ad Hierusalem, in illum locum, ubi inventa fuerat sancta crux Domini; ibi est nunc aeclessia in illo loco que dicitur Calvarie locus; et haec fuit prius extra Hierusalem; sed Helena, quando invenit crucem, collocavit illam locum intus intra Hierusalem.<sup>59</sup>

Willibald’s *Itinerarium* could on such evidence be seen to offer the readers of the work a clearer picture of the Holy Places and the scripture that describes them.

Further evidence for how the *Itinerarium* clarified certain issues can be seen in the way Willibald testifies to the locations of events that are somewhat ambiguous in the Bible. In the Gospels, for example, the precise location of the transfiguration of Christ is omitted. From the fourth century onwards it came to be accepted that it occurred on Mount Thabor, and a number of churches were built there. These churches were visited by Willibald, and the two important justificatory aspects of the text — the building of churches and their being seen by Willibald — were again

<sup>56</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4].

<sup>57</sup> Compare Luke 2. 4 with Matt. 2. 23.

<sup>58</sup> Compare Mark 5. 22–43 with Luke 8. 49–56.

<sup>59</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: ‘And then he came to the place where the sacred cross of the Lord was found; there is now a church in that place called Calvary; and this was formerly outside Jerusalem, but Helena, when she found the cross, placed that location within inner Jerusalem.’

invoked to give credence to the tradition.<sup>60</sup> A similar situation exists with the ascension of Christ, where again there is no precise location given in the Gospels.<sup>61</sup> The problem is compounded because Matthew and Mark both give the impression that the story of Christ ends in Galilee, while Luke locates the ascension near Jerusalem.<sup>62</sup> Tradition has sided with Luke's apparently more complete version of Christ's last days, and the ascension is said to have occurred on Mount Olivet near Jerusalem. Again this tradition is upheld within Willibald's text because he himself had seen the church that marked the ascension on that mountain. Meanwhile the continued importance of the site where Christ was baptized by John the Baptist is noted, and it is located by Willibald as being a mile from Caesarea.<sup>63</sup> Some attempt is also made to locate Gilgal, where the twelve tribes of the Israelites erected a stone each to mark the crossing of the Jordan. It is emphasized twice that it lies five miles from the spot where Christ was baptized, and that it lies seven miles from Jericho.<sup>64</sup> In addition to such statements, it is clarified where the bodies of certain important figures lie. The bodies of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for example, are noted as lying together in the town of Hebron, and the bodies of Elijah and Abdias (along with that of John the Baptist) are located in Sebaste.<sup>65</sup> In the majority of cases, places are mentioned in order to be geographically and

<sup>60</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: 'Et inde pergentes, venerunt ad montem Thabor, ubi Dominus transfiguratus est; ubi est nunc monasterium monachorum et aecclesia Domino consecrata et Moysi et Helie.'

<sup>61</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: 'Et in monte Oliveti est nunc aecclesia, ubi Dominus ante passionem orabat et dixit ad discipulos: "Vigilate et orate, ut non iniretis in temptationem." Et inde venit ad aecclesiam in ipso monte, ubi Dominus ascendit in caelum.'

<sup>62</sup> Compare Matt. 28. 16–20, Mark 16. 7, 14–20, and Luke 24. 33, 53.

<sup>63</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: 'et inde ibant super unum mil. ad Jordanne, ubi Dominus fuerat baptizatus. Ibi est nunc aecclesia in columnis lapideis sursum elevata, et subtus aecclesia est nunc arida terra, ubi Dominus fuit baptizatus in ipso loco; et ubi nunc baptizant, ibi stat crux lignea in medio, et parva dirivatio aque stat illic, et unus funiculus extensus supra Iordannem, hinc et inde firmatus: tunc in sollempnitate epiphania infirmi et egroti venientes et habent se de funiculo et sic demergant in aquam, sed et mulieres que sunt steriles venient ibi'.

<sup>64</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: 'tunc et veniebant ad Galgala; ibi sunt inter 5 milia; et 12 lapides illic sunt in aecclesia; illa est lignea et non magna. Illic sunt 12 lapides, quos tulerunt filii Israel de Iordanne et portaverunt ad Galgala super 5 milia et ponebant ad testimonium transmigrationis illorum. Et tunc illic orantes, pergebant ad Hieicho super 7 milia a Iordanne'.

<sup>65</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: 'Et inde tunc ibat ad castellum Aframia; ibi requiescent tres patriarche, Abraham, Isac et Iacob, cum uxoribus suis; and p. 100: [...] venerunt ad urbe Sebastia [...] et ibi requiescent nunc Iohannis baptista et Abdias et Heliseus propheta.'



spiritually located, as if it was produced as a guide to describe how the Holy Land in the eighth century reflected its illustrious past, rather than to record the curious reminiscences of Bishop Willibald.

The composition of the *Itinerarium* does, therefore, appear to give weight to certain readings of the Bible, with perhaps an emphasis on confirming the reality of the scriptures. Autopsy — the directly observed knowledge of the narrator — is absolutely crucial to the work, and one explicitly stated by Hygeburg in the preface: ‘suisque oculis venerandi viri Willibaldi corporaliter cognita suisque plantis per omnia palpanto penetrandoque visibiliter conparuere’.<sup>66</sup> It is a sentiment repeated later on in the work in relation to a description of Mount Vulcanus in Sicily: ‘Ille fomix, quem scriptores habere solent, illum videbat.’<sup>67</sup> There is a wider tradition here of the mediation of distance for the audience of travel writing.<sup>68</sup> Throughout it is the contingent details of Willibald’s experiences that are important. The story of the wedding at Cana is, for example, referred to with an added detail to help give it more credence for the German audience: a large church near the site still had one of the six pots Christ had filled with wine.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, just as many of Arculf’s explicit contributions to Adomnán’s text came down to detailing the arrangement of lamps in the churches, similar details are recounted by Willibald about the church on Mount Olivet.<sup>70</sup> Augustine’s notion that geographical knowledge should be narrated on the basis of contingent experience rather than derived from books would appear to have had some meaning in Heidenheim too.<sup>71</sup> Willibald’s *Itinerarium* therefore works because Willibald himself had seen the churches and tombs that were physical reminders and proofs of the places and

<sup>66</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, pref.: ‘It is these things we will undertake to narrate, which the reverend man Willibald saw with his own eyes and over which he trod with his own feet.’

<sup>67</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: ‘And that pumice stone that writers speak of he saw.’

<sup>68</sup> Frank, *Memory of the Eyes*, esp. p. 51.

<sup>69</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: ‘et veniebant in villam Chanaan, ubi Dominus aquas in vino convertit. Illic est aecclesia magna, et in illa aecclesia stat in altare unum de vi hydriis, quas Dominus iusserat implere aqua, et in vinum verse sunt’.

<sup>70</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: ‘Et in medio aecclesiae stat de aere factum sculptum ac speciosum et est quadrans, illud stat in medio aecclesie, ubi Dominus ascendit in caelum; et in medio aereo est factum vitreum quadrangulum, et ibi est in vitreo parvum cisindulum, et circa cisindulum est illud vitreum undique clausum, et ideo est undique clausum, ut semper ardere possit in pluvia sed et in sole.’

<sup>71</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, II. 29 (43–44).

events people in Willibald's orbit in *Germania* would only have read about. That Hygeburg glossed over the textual origins of Willibald's account, recasting it as a dictation, may have been intended to strengthen the bond between Willibald, his experiences, and his flock in Bavaria. If the work explains anything by way of exegesis, it is the present reality of a remote Christian past for Willibald's community. This was perhaps a fitting message to promote with the dedication of a new church in a region with only a short Christian past. Willibald's centrality in this process, meanwhile, meant that he achieved near saint-like status in his own lifetime, a fact which goes some way to explaining why he was subject to a *vita* before he had even died.<sup>72</sup>

### *The Itinerarium in Hagiography*

Willibald's *Itinerarium* was given renewed life when it was incorporated into Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebalidi*. In the new *vita* the long account of the pilgrimage was something of a centrepiece. The new setting for the text brought it into a new spiritual context where it was associated with a genuine saint in Wynnebald and, in Willibald, a *vir venerabilis* on his way to becoming a saint. The different status of the two brothers helps to explain the overall shape of the *vita(e)*. In Hygeburg's intended schema, in which the story of Willibald preceded that of Wynnebald, the whole work builds to a spiritual crescendo in the translation of St Wynnebald's relics from Heidenheim to Eichstätt and the discovery that Wynnebald's body had remained incorrupt after fifteen years.<sup>73</sup> It was a fitting event with which to confirm Wynnebald's status, explain Willibald's policies at Eichstätt, and draw the work to a close. Clearly later copyists were less convinced by the ordering and placed the *Vita Wynnebalidi* first, despite the consequent disruption in narrative flow; perhaps, since the *Doppelbiographie* followed the *Vita Bonifatii*, Wynnebald stood better than Willibald as a saintly figure alongside Boniface, but the ordering stayed the same even when not included with the work of Willibald of Mainz. There were, it seems, complicated ideals of sanctity involved in the writing and dissemination of the *vitae*.

The hagiographical context for the *Itinerarium* now placed the description of the Holy Land more firmly into the realms of the liturgy. In the Merovingian and early Carolingian period much hagiography appears to have been written in order

<sup>72</sup> See p. 252 above.

<sup>73</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 13. See p. 278 below.

to be used in the liturgy of the Church.<sup>74</sup> Indeed Hygeburg addressed her work ‘ad omnibus presbiteris seu diaconibus et omnibus aecclesiastici regiminis proceribus [...] venerandis imoque in Christo carissimis omnibus sacerdotalis infule honore ditatis presbiteris preclareque indolis diaconibus et nihilomnius abba sive omnibus popularie condicionis proceribus’, the inclusion of laymen at the end denoting that the work was not intended as an in-house monastic *vita*.<sup>75</sup> Hygeburg’s use of story-telling perhaps aided the transmission of the message in the public environment. The emplotted form of Willibald’s *Itinerarium* is one of the clearest ways it differs from Adomnán’s work. In *De locis sanctis* Arculf’s agency is limited to having seen things; Adomnán’s prose does not tell a story about the Gallic bishop. Its structure is entirely geographical and does not depend on the progression of Arculf from one place to the next. The *Itinerarium*, by contrast, is entirely dependent on Willibald’s movement and the progression of the story about him. A possible explanation for the difference between the two texts is that *De locis sanctis*, despite its public origins, was not intended as a liturgical work whereas the *Itinerarium* possibly was, at least once it had been incorporated into a saint’s Life.

The connection between the Holy Land and the community in Heidenheim was intensified by expanding the story of Willibald’s life to include his work in Bavaria. Bearing in mind that the Holy Land remained an *ignotitia* for the dioceses of Eichstätt, their single connection to that region was through Willibald. It is perhaps for this reason that Willibald had his experiences committed to parchment — not for vanity, but in order to preserve the connection with the Holy Land for future generations. Hygeburg emphasized the importance of Willibald’s experiences and how they affected his community in Bavaria, writing: ‘ille beatus barilion Willibaldus in omnibus, que late lustrando propiis cernebat luminiis, optima elegando arriepiebat arriepiendoque omnibus sibi subditorum falangis recte conversationis studium bene vivendo in verbo’.<sup>76</sup> There is also what might be a

<sup>74</sup> See McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, pp. 241–43, and Heene, ‘Merovingian and Carolingian Hagiography?’; van Egmond, ‘Audiences of Early Medieval Hagiographical Texts’.

<sup>75</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, pref.: ‘to all priests or deacons and all princes of churchly order [...] to all those venerable and most beloved in Christ priests known under the title of presbyter and deacons of excellent nature, notwithstanding the abbots and all noblemen of secular rank’. That it is noblemen rather than laymen in general that are addressed reveals much about Eichstätt’s aristocratic connections, on which see Weinfurter, ‘Das Bistum Willibalds’.

<sup>76</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 6: ‘The blessed man chose out the best from all that he had seen abroad with his own eyes, adopted it, and having adopted it, submitted it to his disciples for acceptance, showing them good example by word and deed.’

subtle comparison between the description of the holy places and Bavaria when Hygeburg wrote, 'per vitreos Baguariorum campos cum aeclesiis atque presbiteris sanctorumque reliquiis dignas Domino delibat dona'.<sup>77</sup> Through the medium of the saint's Life, Hygeburg was able to bind the communities of Heidenheim and Eichstätt closer to the world where Christianity began. Like in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, this placed the church of the author in a wider context but, unlike Bede, Willibald and Hygeburg blurred the distinction between history and biblical exegesis in order to achieve their goal.

The church complex at Eichstätt might also reveal that the bond between the church and the Holy Land led to physical representations of that connection. Modern excavations have revealed a circular building with what would have been an upper storey and two towers next to the eighth-century cathedral church.<sup>78</sup> It seems likely, but by no means certain, that it was a chapel built in imitation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.<sup>79</sup> A similar structure has also been found at Fulda.<sup>80</sup> Precisely when the Eichstätt chapel was built is also unclear as it can be dated no earlier than the ninth century with any certainty.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps what is significant is that this relatively unusual structure should have appeared in Willibald's Eichstätt and in Fulda (to whom Willibald left lands before his death)<sup>82</sup> at all sometime after 787. This raises the possibility that ideas about the shape of religious spaces had in some way been influenced by the messages about Near Eastern sacred spaces contained within Willibald's/Hygeburg's work. Not only did the *Vita Willibaldi* establish a shared spiritual meaning for the churches of Bavaria and the Holy Land, but this in turn seems to have inspired some (admittedly small-scale) attempts to create physical echoes of the Holy Land in Germany.

The symbolic importance of churches in Willibald's *Itinerarium* needs further comment in this context. Nowhere is correct Christian practice illustrated better than in particular places of veneration. Churches appear to add a layer of certainty to Willibald's own eyewitness account, effectively creating two expert witnesses in himself and the Holy Places themselves. Rarely was it enough for Willibald to

<sup>77</sup> Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 6: 'And all through the land of Bavaria, now dotted about with churches, priests' houses, and the relics of saints, he amassed treasures worthy of the Lord.'

<sup>78</sup> Parsons, 'Some Churches', pp. 49–50.

<sup>79</sup> Parsons, 'Some Churches', pp. 50–54. The church is described in Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, I. 2, and Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *Vita Willibaldi*, c. 4].

<sup>80</sup> Parsons, 'Some Churches', pp. 54–55.

<sup>81</sup> Parsons, 'Some Churches', p. 54.

<sup>82</sup> *UBF*, no. 172.

record that something happened in a particular location; wherever possible he remarked that there was some church or shrine to commemorate the event that occurred. One particular reference in the *Itinerarium* helps lead to a consideration of the importance of churches in Hygeburg's text. It comes in a reference to the Gospel of John:

Et ibi est puteus ille prope castella, ubi Dominus postulavit aquam bibere a Samaritana muliere. Et super illum puteum nunc est aeclesia, et illa mons est ibi, in quo adorabunt Samaritani, et illa mulier dixit ad Domino: 'Patres nostri in monte hoc adoraverunt, et tu dicis, quod in Hierosolimis est locus, ubi adorare oportet' [John 4. 20].<sup>83</sup>

The presentation of this biblical reference by Willibald is peculiar. Christ's discussion with the woman in Sebaste is usually taken to be significant because it is a discourse on the nature of the Holy Spirit,<sup>84</sup> but that significance is entirely ignored by Hygeburg. Furthermore, the precise citation of John is misleading, for Christ rebuffs the woman by saying 'woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father'.<sup>85</sup> It is possible that the quotation had been included simply because it related to the temple of Gerizim. Direct speech in medieval writing is, however, rarely included lightly because it could function as a rhetorical tool to communicate truths to an audience;<sup>86</sup> that Willibald was quoting from the Bible only makes this more important. One might therefore ask precisely what 'truth' Willibald was emphasizing in his work.

The woman's comment about places of worship could be seen as having great relevance to a society where patterns of religious worship had been altered. It is significant that the focus is on the woman's question and not the answer Christ gave. Since Jerome, Christ's answer has been interpreted as saying that earthly places of worship are in many ways unimportant compared to accepting and practising the genuine faith, and has been related to pilgrimage and *peregrinatio*.<sup>87</sup> The woman's

<sup>83</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: 'Near the town [Sebaste] is the well where our Lord asked the Samaritan woman to give Him water to drink. Over that well there now stands a church, and there is the Mount on which the Samaritans worshipped and of which the woman said to our Lord: "Our forbears worshipped on this mount, but Thou sayest that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."'

<sup>84</sup> John 4. 7–30.

<sup>85</sup> John 4. 20–21.

<sup>86</sup> See for example Partner, 'New Cornificius', pp. 11–12.

<sup>87</sup> Jerome, *Epistolae*, *PL*, 22, 58:2–3, invokes this passage in persuading Paulinus of Nola not to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem because it is not important to visit physical places but to live a good life.

question, on the other hand, looks the other way, to a conception of religion that focuses upon physical holy places as pivotal to proper worship. This is a conception that was perceived to be important in pagan *Germania*, with its sacred trees, springs, and groves.<sup>88</sup> It is also a conception perpetuated to a certain degree by Christian works such as *De locis sanctis* and Willibald's *Itinerarium* with their emphasis on the spiritual importance of specific earthly places. In the mission field these two attitudes had run side-by-side since Gregory the Great had ordered Augustine to adapt pagan temples in Britain to ease the transition of the Anglo-Saxons from paganism to Christianity.<sup>89</sup> Gregory's approach was itself adapted by the Anglo-Saxon missionaries with, for example, the oratory at Fritzlar being built using the Oak of Jupiter. The name of Hygeburg's own monastery, Heidenheim (literally 'home of the heathen') strongly suggests that the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* was produced in precisely one of those kinds of adapted religious places.<sup>90</sup> There was little practical space for the abstractions of Augustine and Jerome if the situation maintained a degree of competitiveness. In this context the statement of the woman in Sebaste might have had more significance for denying the importance of traditional pagan practices in the light of the adoption of the Christian faith, with perhaps Jerusalem meant metaphorically in Willibald's narrative as 'Christian places'.

### *Encountering Islam*

Inherent in Willibald's account of his pilgrimage was a strong message about the strength of Christianity.<sup>91</sup> In this context it is worth considering how Willibald's experiences of Islam could have affected the outlook in Heidenheim.<sup>92</sup> What, in

<sup>88</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>89</sup> Bede, *HE*, I. 30.

<sup>90</sup> It should be noted that there was already a church in Heidenheim before Willibald and Wynnebald founded their own monastery, so the Anglo-Saxons cannot be credited with evangelizing the area: see Parsons, 'Some Churches', pp. 40–41; Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 65. The presence of an early church does not, however, mean that the pagan significance of the site had been forgotten, especially since the Anglo-Saxons were so concerned about semi-pagan superstitions in the area.

<sup>91</sup> Katharine Scarfe Beckett, *Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of the Islamic World*, CSASE, 33 (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 52–53.

<sup>92</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 223–26.

particular, did the *Vita Willibaldi* reveal about Islam to monks who studied the work or congregations who heard it read out on feast days in Eichstätt, Heidenheim, or elsewhere? The fast and dramatic expansion of the Arab peoples following Islam had begun to threaten Europe directly in the early decades of the eighth century, just at the time when Willibald was on his pilgrimage.<sup>93</sup> Maintaining the theme of parallels between Bavaria and the Holy Land, Willibald calls Muslims 'pagani' throughout his account of his travels, and occasionally 'Sarraceni'. The words chosen reveal much about the convergence of experience, ideology, and language as Willibald sought to place the Islamic world within the Christian one.

The physical power of the truth of Christianity forms a distinct subtext to the story of Willibald's pilgrimage. A comparison may be drawn with *De locis sanctis* and the suggestion made above that this dealt with the Muslim threat to Christendom in a way that helped to emphasize the superiority of Christianity. The extent to which the Franks and Anglo-Saxons could assess the threat of Islam is difficult to ascertain. The speed with which the incursions from Spain were repelled appears to have given many Christians removed from events a certain confidence. Bede, for example, mentioned the attacks in the final chapter of substance in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, noting that 'et ipsi non multo post in eadem provincia dignas suae perfidiae poenas luebant'.<sup>94</sup> In the *Chronica maiora* he refers to attacks on Constantinople with great detachment.<sup>95</sup> He also repeated Adomnán's almost derogatory comments about the wooden mosque that was the forerunner of the al-Aqsa temple, on the south-east corner of the temple platform dominated by the Dome of the Rock.<sup>96</sup> Boniface does not appear to have been overly concerned about Muslims either; he mentioned them only in a letter advising Bugga not to go on pilgrimage until the threat of attack in Italy had subsided, which he implies he did not think would take too long.<sup>97</sup> What these examples tell us is that Northern

<sup>93</sup> On Islamic expansion in this period, see Hawting, *First Dynasty of Islam*; Blankinship, *End of the Jihād State*.

<sup>94</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 23: 'after a short time they paid the price of their faithlessness'. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 226–27.

<sup>95</sup> Bede, *Chronica maiora* = *De temporum ratione*, ed. by Jones, c. 66.

<sup>96</sup> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, I. 1; Bede, *De locis sanctis*, II. 3. Josef van Ess, 'Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: An Analysis of Some Texts', in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, vol. 1: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem', ed. by Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 9. 1 (Oxford, 1992), pp. 89–103 (p. 91).

<sup>97</sup> Boniface, *Die Briefe*, no. 27. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 227, and Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent*, p. 19.



Europe was at least informed about the Arabic threat, and people thought it merited mention; it was thus not irrelevant to communities in Germany, even if any threat was considered remote. One might therefore profitably consider the more extensive experiences of the Arab world Willibald brought with him to *Germania* and had in part committed to parchment.

The experiences of Willibald perhaps gave him reasons for both optimism and concern regarding the relative strength of Christianity against Islam. In the far west, Umayyad expansion beyond the Pyrenees had been checked by Duke Eudo of Aquitaine in 721, just a year before Willibald travelled through the West Frankish lands on the way to Rome.<sup>98</sup> Charles Martel's famous victory at Poitiers in 732 against 'Abd al-Rahmān, followed by a further triumph in 739, proved decisive, although it seems to have been of greater consequence for the Franks than the Umayyads.<sup>99</sup> In the East Maslama b. abd-Malik had attempted to seize Constantinople on behalf of Caliph Sulaymān (715–18) in 717 with a reported 80,000 troops and 1200 ships; the new Greek emperor, Leo III, however, decimated the navy with Greek fire, and Sulaymān's successor Umar II (718–21) was forced to concede that the task was impossible.<sup>100</sup> It was only a short time afterwards in 724 that Willibald arrived in Syria. The military defeats the Muslims suffered compounded the financial problems of the empire, which had arisen due to the flamboyant expenditure of the amīrs.<sup>101</sup> There was also internal strife as the *Mawālī* (non- and half-Arab Muslims) sought rights on a par with Arab Muslims, and different tribal and religious factions fought for control.<sup>102</sup> A succession of short reigns had weakened caliphal power in the Islamic world, and it was only steadied — for now — with the long rule of Caliph Hishām (724–43), the fourth son of

<sup>98</sup> *Liber pontificalis*, I, 91. 11. On the Frankish perspective, see Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 84–85. On the Umayyad perspective, see Blankinship, *End of the Jihād State*, pp. 112–13.

<sup>99</sup> Blankinship, *End of the Jihād State*, pp. 163–64; Hawting, *First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 83–84.

<sup>100</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia* s.a. 6208–10 (AM), trans. by Henry Turtledove, *The Chronicle of Theophanes: An English Translation of anni mundi 6095–6305 (AD 602–813) with Introduction and Notes* (Philadelphia, 1982), pp. 82–91; Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, pp. 105–06; Blankinship, *End of the Jihād State*, pp. 104–06.

<sup>101</sup> This financial crisis had, it should be noted, been firmly reversed by the late eighth century: see Alan Walmsley, 'Production, Exchange and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean: Old Structures, New Systems?', in *Long Eighth Century*, ed. by Hansen and Wickham, pp. 265–343.

<sup>102</sup> Hawting, *First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 77–81.

‘Abd al-Malik to rise to power.<sup>103</sup> However, when Willibald arrived in his court as a prisoner in 724, Hishām’s reign had only just begun and there had been little time to bring peace.<sup>104</sup> Upon meeting Willibald, Hishām released him without penalty. This may be a topos, similar to the story of Willibrord’s release from the ‘court’ of a pagan Frisian king.<sup>105</sup> Yet the tolerance displayed by the Caliph contrasts with the image of unjust pagan chiefs elsewhere, and does fit with Hishām’s characteristically conciliatory policies towards Christians, for which he was praised by writers in Egypt.<sup>106</sup> Thus Willibald found himself in a region where there was both insecurity and some degree of tolerance, making his three-year pilgrimage possible, but also making it dangerous.

A concerted effort had been made by the Arabs to alter the cultural and physical face of the Holy Land in the years between the pilgrimages of Arculf and Willibald. The Greek and Persian Empires had been forced back and, in the latter’s case, consumed by the rise of Islam. Under the caliphates of ‘Abd al-Malik (685–705) and his son al-Walid (705–15) Greek and Persian administrations were reformed and Arabic was gradually imposed as the official language of the new empire.<sup>107</sup> ‘Abd al-Malik had, moreover, had the Dome of the Rock built in Jerusalem as a direct challenge to Judaism and Christianity since Arculf’s visit.<sup>108</sup> This he achieved by locating the shrine on the rock where the Ark of the Temple had rested and decorating the building with inscriptions such as ‘He [i.e. God] does not beget’.<sup>109</sup> The proportions of the Dome even seem to be modelled on the dome of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>110</sup> From this point onwards, the spiritual landscape of the Holy Land

<sup>103</sup> This stability under Hishām did not last: see now Blankinship, *End of the Jihād State*.

<sup>104</sup> Willibald relates that the name of the ‘king’ was ‘Myrmumus’. This is most likely a Latinization of Hishām’s official title, Amīr al-Mu’minīn (‘Commander of the Faithful’), the secular title employed by caliphs since Abū Bakr in 634. Scarfe Beckett, *Anglo-Saxons Perceptions*, p. 51.

<sup>105</sup> Alcuin, *VW*, c. 11.

<sup>106</sup> Blankinship, *End of the Jihād State*, pp. 95 and 267.

<sup>107</sup> Hawting, *First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 9–11.

<sup>108</sup> On the Dome of the Rock, see Amikam Elad, ‘Why Did ‘Abd al-Malik Build the Dome of the Rock? A Re-examination of the Muslim Sources’, in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, vol. I, ed. by Raby and Johns, pp. 33–58.

<sup>109</sup> On the Great Mosque of Damascus, see Elad, ‘Why Did ‘Abd al-Malik Build the Dome of the Rock?’, pp. 51–56. The same inscription was imposed in churches in Egypt: Blankinship, *End of the Jihād State*, p. 94.

<sup>110</sup> Doron Chen, ‘The Facades of the Dome of the Rock and the Rotunda of the Anastasis Compared’, in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, vol. II: *Jerusalem and Early Islam*, ed. by Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 9. 2 (Oxford, 1999), pp. 191–96.

was to mutate and become even more complicated than it had already been. 'Abd al-Malik developed Jerusalem as the focus of the *hajj* and as a new capital, having lost control of Mecca and Medina to Ibn al-Zubayr.<sup>111</sup> The combination of visual Islamification and imperialism was continued in Damascus. The Church of St John the Baptist — itself built upon a pagan shrine to Christianize the local sacred space — was converted into a mosque under the aegis of al-Walid.<sup>112</sup> In this case the Christians were given access to other churches rather than simply expelled, but the challenge was undeniable. Willibald spent time in both Jerusalem and Damascus on his travels and, in the heated religious climate, was likely to have been acutely aware of these developments.

Despite the increased visual presence of Islam in the Holy Land since Arculf's pilgrimage, Willibald and Hygeburg made fewer references to Islamic religious spaces than Arculf, Adomnán, and Bede had done — none, in fact. It is possible that there is a direct correspondence between these two facts: Arculf had clearly not been impressed by the wooden temple in Jerusalem and thus it had helped to emphasize the superiority of Christianity, whereas in Willibald's day the presence of the Dome of the Rock was far more impressive and thus a threat to the visual superiority of Christianity in the city. Wider Christian concerns from the Holy Land are made evident in Willibald's *Itinerarium* when it is reported that the Christians of Nazareth had been threatened by Muslims wanting to destroy the local church;<sup>113</sup> the competition over sacred space was intense. Perhaps more importantly, this struggle for sacred space had a mirror in centres like Heidenheim in *Germania*, where the fight was between Christian and pagan cultures. Hygeburg's work in this context suggests that there may have been an attempt to provide a typology of Christian space.

### *The Iconoclast Debate*

Willibald encountered one consequence of Muslim expansion when he left the Holy Land on a boat from Tyre to Constantinople in 727 and found himself in the

<sup>111</sup> Elad, 'Why Did 'Abd al-Malik Build the Dome of the Rock?', pp. 47–48.

<sup>112</sup> This is unlikely to have been the structure the Frankish pilgrim Arculf saw in Damascus in c. 680 and reported by Adomnán in *De locis sanctis*, I. 1, since al-Walid did not rise to power until 705. On Damascus, see Finbar B. Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Meaning of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden, 2001), especially Chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>113</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4].

middle of the Iconoclast controversy.<sup>114</sup> The controversy was a long and bitter attempt to find, in Averil Cameron's words, 'a language by which God could be represented [...] in relation to the emphasis placed by writers [...] on symbolic interpretation and revelation through signs'.<sup>115</sup> Arguments centred upon whether images were suitable focal points for religious veneration or, because they could never hope to convey the perfect truth of God, they were misleading or even idolatrous. Iconoclasts (literally 'destroyers of images') believed the latter and dominated in Byzantine society for much of the eighth century before eventually losing out to the 'iconophiles', who believed in the veneration — but not worship — of images that could represent signs.

The causes of the debate are largely tangential to the message of the *Vita Willibaldi* but nevertheless imposed on Willibald's experiences. Constantinople was in a state of decline, with a dwindling population that felt increasingly at odds with the city's past and late antique pagan imagery.<sup>116</sup> Arab expansion from the south and nomadic incursions to the north had severely restricted Constantinople's sphere of influence. When a huge volcanic eruption exploded in the Aegean Sea in 726 — the year before Willibald's arrival — the beleaguered Greeks felt moved to reseek actively God's favour.<sup>117</sup> Emperor Leo III, who was himself moved by the volcanic eruption according to Theophanes, replaced an icon of the face of Christ

<sup>114</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]. Useful for the basics (and more) of the Iconoclast controversy are Robin Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and its Icons* (London, 1986); Averil Cameron, 'The Language of Images: The Rise of Icons and Christian Representation', in *The Church and the Arts*, ed. by Diana Wood, *Studies in Church History*, 28 (Oxford, 1992), pp. 1–42; Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 383–406. It should be noted that Islamic expansion was but one of many contributing factors to Iconoclasm (Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, pp. 106–18; Cameron, 'Language of Images', p. 18). A useful recent guide to the sources is Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon (with Robert Ousterhout), *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca. 680–850): The Sources* (Aldershot, 2001).

<sup>115</sup> Cameron, 'Language of Images', p. 41.

<sup>116</sup> Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, *Constantinople in the Eighth Century* (Leiden, 1984), p. 33; Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 386.

<sup>117</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, s.a. 6218 (AM). The symbolic importance of the volcanic eruption seems to have struck Peter Brown (*Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 392) more than most. The impact of the physical environment upon early medieval culture is often marginalized as a subject of research. For some recent attempts to begin redressing the situation, see Michael McCormick, Paul E. Dutton, and Paul A. Mayewski, 'Volcanoes and the Climate Forcing of Carolingian Europe, A.D. 750–950', *Speculum*, 82 (2007), 865–95; Trevor Palmer, *Perilous Planet Earth: Catastrophes and Catastrophism Through the Ages* (Cambridge, 2003), esp. pp. 336–62.

which had stood over the entrance to the imperial palace with a simple rendering of the cross and gave permission to frontier bishops to destroy icons in churches.<sup>118</sup> Suspicions also existed that Leo was influenced by the iconoclasm of the Arabs. These actions did not please Pope Gregory II, who sent envoys to take issue with the Emperor.<sup>119</sup> It was at this point that Willibald arrived, fresh from the Islamic countries; after seeing the mosques of Damascus and Jerusalem it seems unlikely that Willibald would not have understood the importance of this debate, although iconoclasm was possibly not then ubiquitous in the Arab world.<sup>120</sup> Willibald is said to have lived in Constantinople for nearly two years whilst the debate raged, so cannot have been unaware of it.

Willibald himself was somewhat reticent about the entire affair, describing Constantinople purely in terms of the saints' bodies there, in keeping with the rest of his text. Of Gregory II and Leo III, meanwhile, Hygeburg wrote simply that 'et post duobus annis navigaverunt inde cum nuntiis papae et cesaris' when he left for Italy in c. 729.<sup>121</sup> This statement strikes a notably noncommittal note about Iconoclasm but does at least hint at Willibald's connection to the parties involved. Hygeburg compiled the *Vita Willibaldi* at a time when the Iconoclast controversy was hotly debated in Frankia as well as Byzantium. Willibald died the same year, 787, that the Second Council of Nicaea was held to bring some resolution to the question, although a series of misunderstandings and arguments prompted only more enmity between the Frankish and Byzantine courts.<sup>122</sup> A reference by Hygeburg to the First Council of Nicaea, held by Constantine in 325 to denounce Arianism, may be more meaningful than it appears in the context of the sharp

<sup>118</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, s.a. 6218 (AM).

<sup>119</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, s.a. 6217 (AM); *Liber pontificalis*, 91. 23–24.

<sup>120</sup> On the indifference of some early caliphs to iconoclasm, see Geoffrey R. D. King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm and the Declaration of Doctrine', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 48 (1985), 267–77.

<sup>121</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: 'they set sail from [Constantinople] with the envoys of the pope and the emperor'.

<sup>122</sup> For an overview of Nicaea II and responses to it, see Ann Freeman, 'Opus Caroli regis contra synodum: An Introduction', in her *Theodulf of Orléans: Charlemagne's Spokesman Against the Second Council of Nicaea* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 1–123 (pp. 1–12). Also David Ganz, 'Theology and the Organisation of Thought', in *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II: c. 700–c. 900, ed. by McKitterick, pp. 758–85 (pp. 773–77) and Celia Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ's Passion* (Cambridge, 2001), esp. pp. 39–52.

divisions Iconoclasm was bringing to the Church in both the East and West.<sup>123</sup> Willibald was said to have broken his stay in Constantinople to visit Nicaea, ‘ubi olim habebat cesar Constantinus synodum, et ibi fuerunt ad synodo 318 episcopi, illi omnes habebant synodum’.<sup>124</sup> It has been suggested that Willibald’s motivation was to see the images of the 318 bishops before they were destroyed.<sup>125</sup> But Willibald’s own comments on the First Council of Nicaea add a significance beyond his visit that emphasizes the unity of the Church. The necessity of a united Church was a common, but not uniquely, Bonifatian concern.<sup>126</sup> Indeed one should remember to read the *Vita Willibaldi* alongside the *Vita Bonifatii*, which placed the *Concilium Germanicum* in the same history as the great ecumenical councils.<sup>127</sup> The repetition in Willibald’s account of the word ‘synodus’ should remind us that synods were used by Boniface’s circle in Germany to promote orthodoxy, but also that many bishops did not attend.<sup>128</sup> The *Vita Willibaldi*, distinctly a product of the Bonifatian inner circle, can therefore be seen to promote a united orthodoxy on a universal, extra-Germanic level, using the symbolism of Constantinople and Nicaea as holy places.

The circles of Boniface were by no means unaffected by debates on icons. They were deeply concerned about the pagan veneration of idols, and thus had to give great thought to the correct use of images in Christianity.<sup>129</sup> Boniface composed an elaborate picture poem on Christ on the cross in the style of the fourth-century writer Porphyrius Optatianus, who had used his poems to try and win favour at the

<sup>123</sup> For a convenient account of Nicaea I, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA, 1981), pp. 208–23.

<sup>124</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 4]: ‘where formerly the Emperor Constantine held a synod at which three hundred and eighteen bishops were present, all holding council’.

<sup>125</sup> Mark Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium 600–1025* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 139–40.

<sup>126</sup> C. H. Talbot, ‘St Boniface and the German Mission’, in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. by Geoffrey J. Cumming, *Studies in Church History*, 6 (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 45–57 (pp. 52–53); Jörg Jarnut, ‘Bonifatius und die Fränkischen Reformkonzilien (743–48)’, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, 109 (1979), 1–26; Reuter, “Kirchenreform” und “Kirchenpolitik”.

<sup>127</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 8; Palmer, ‘Hagiography and Time’.

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, Ewig, ‘Milo’; Büttner, ‘Bonifatius und die Karolinger’.

<sup>129</sup> Christian Beutler, ‘Einhard und Bonifatius – ein Beitrag zur Bildpolitik der Karolinger’, in *Einhard: Studien zu Leben und Werk*, ed. by Hermann Schefers (Darmstadt, 1997), pp. 139–57.

court of Constantine the Great.<sup>130</sup> Such poems were to prove popular, particularly those associated with Hrabanus Maurus's *De laudibus sanctae crucis* (c. 822), because of their power to represent powerful Christian themes without focusing on the image.<sup>131</sup> They indulged neither the extremes of iconoclasm nor the excesses of art for *adoratio*. Gregory the Great had called for such moderation in a much-discussed letter of October 600 to the iconoclast Bishop Serenus of Marseille, in which the Pope argued for the value of images in teaching.<sup>132</sup> Bede, too, was keen to defend the careful use of images after hearing about the problems in Constantinople.<sup>133</sup> Theodulf of Orléans in the 790s was cautious about even Gregory's views and encouraged a subjugation of learning to the written word.<sup>134</sup> Again the influence of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* loomed large.<sup>135</sup> Perhaps not so far from either view, Boniface commissioned Eadburga of Thanet to produce a copy of St Peter's *Epistles* in gold for Boniface to place before *oculum carnalium* while preaching. The power of the written word was here hoped to be a sufficient and appropriate preaching aid to impress a congregation.

Concerns with icons are manifest in the hagiographical interest, or rather lack thereof, in the miraculous.<sup>136</sup> Miracles were themselves considered to be 'signs' or

<sup>130</sup> Boniface, *Carmina*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Poetae, 1 (Berlin, 1881), no. 2; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 145 (rather dismissively).

<sup>131</sup> On Hrabanus, see Chazelle, *Crucified God*, pp. 99–119; Winfrid Wilhelmy, 'Die Entstehung von *De laudibus* im Spannungsfeld von Bilderstreit und Glaubenswahrheit', in *Rabanus Maurus: Auf den Spuren eines karolingischen Gelehrten*, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Kotzur (Mainz, 2006), pp. 23–32.

<sup>132</sup> Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistolae*, ed. by Paul Ewald and Ludo M. Hartmann, MGH Epp., 2 (Berlin, 1899), XI. 10.

<sup>133</sup> Paul Meyvaert, 'Bede and the Church Paintings at Wearmouth-Jarrow', *ASE*, 8 (1979), 63–77 (pp. 68–70), demonstrated that Bede knew about the situation in Constantinople by 730, prompting some of his comments in *De templo*, II, ed. by David Hurst, CCSL, 119A (Turnhout, 1969), pp. 143–234 (pp. 212–13).

<sup>134</sup> *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, ed. by Ann Freeman, MGH Conc., 2, Suppl. 1 (Hannover, 1998), III. 23. Ann Freeman, 'Scripture and Images in the *Libri Carolini*', in *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane, 41 (Spoleto, 1994), pp. 163–88 (pp. 170–74).

<sup>135</sup> Celia Chazelle, "Not in Painting but in Writing": Augustine and the Supremacy of the Word in the *Libri Carolini*', in *Reading and Wisdom: The 'De doctrina christiana' of Augustine in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Edward D. English (Notre Dame, IN, 1995), pp. 1–22.

<sup>136</sup> Giulia Barone, 'Une hagiographie sans miracles: observations en marge de quelques vies du X<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental*, pp. 435–46; van Egmond, 'Misgivings about Miracles'.



‘icons’: symbols that allowed people access to the knowledge of God.<sup>137</sup> The priest of Utrecht wrote scornfully quoting John 4. 48, ‘nisi signa et prodigia videritis, non creditis’, at his audience for complaining about the lack of miracles in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*.<sup>138</sup> The temptation was to adore miracles rather than the higher truths represented by the saints — and indeed some critics of icons, notably Theodulf and Claudius of Turin, were sceptical about images of saints too.<sup>139</sup> Again this tapped into Gregorian sensibilities expressed in the *Dialogi* and *Moralia in Job*: miracles were not necessary to faith, and probably largely belonged to the Church’s early days.<sup>140</sup> In keeping with such thought, there is little miraculous in the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*. The discovery of the incorrupt body of Wynnebald largely exhausts Hygeburg’s intervention of the miraculous, but that in itself is symbolic of purity and asceticism rather than the wondrous.<sup>141</sup> Willibald himself was attributed with no miracles but, as we saw in Chapter 5, simply the ability to lead by pious example. The literary world of Willibald and Hygeburg appears to display characteristics similar to the *karolingische Rationalismus*, and it is tempting to see this as a result of Willibald’s familiarity with the issues at stake in the Iconoclast controversy.

### Conclusion

A close study of the account of Willibald’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land reveals a complex interaction of ideals relating to sanctity, sacred spaces, devotional practices, and literary forms. Willibald’s experiences and the recording of them were not the product of idle curiosity but fed into some important debates on the nature of Christianity in the second half of the eighth century. What made a ‘saint’? What was the meaning of sacred space in newly or imperfectly Christianized lands where old ideas persisted and there was no agreement on new ideas? What literary strategies best stimulated or reinforced religious devotion? Establishing a rigorous and ‘correct’ form of Christianity was a leading principle of the *Bonifatiuskreis*, and Willibald played an active part.

<sup>137</sup> Cameron, ‘Language of Images’, pp. 30–31.

<sup>138</sup> *VaB*, c. 18: ‘Unless you see signs and prodigies, you will not believe’; van Egmond, ‘Misgivings about Miracles’.

<sup>139</sup> *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, III. 7; Claudius of Turin, *Epistolae*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), no. 12.

<sup>140</sup> Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World*, pp. 62–66.

<sup>141</sup> On the symbolism of the incorrupt body, see Gransden, ‘Legends and Traditions’, pp. 5–8.

Willibald's status as a saint in the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* is questionable given that he was still alive when Hygeburg wrote and edited the work. His special status is explained by his centrality within religious life at Eichstätt and Heidenheim. In particular his building of a new church at Eichstätt and the translation of the relics of Wynnebald were a key strategy in developing the identity of Christian community in the region. This was the focal point for veneration of the brothers. Moreover Willibald bought experiences from the wider Christian world: from Anglo-Saxon England, Rome, Monte Cassino, Constantinople, and the Holy Land. By relating these experiences in church Willibald helped to locate Eichstätt's place — physical and theological — in Christendom. What made his experiences distinctive from, say, Boniface was that he had seen the symbolic battle for space between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Holy Land, and heard the arguments about the representation of Christianity in Byzantine and maybe also Islamic thought. It was these things that shaped Willibald's plans for his religious community. But what the success of his plans rested upon was the way in which they were articulated.

It seems that Willibald began by writing an *itinerarium* — a stylized account of his travels. In this work the memory of Willibald's journey was structured so that it had a permanent and replicable (literary) form that would last beyond his lifetime; moreover, it fulfilled a distinctive purpose for his community in Germany. Through the description of the Holy Places the truth of the Bible, and thus its message, could be communicated to the religious and lay people in church. There were two testaments to this truth in the eighth century: the churches in the Holy Land, which stood to commemorate particular events, and Willibald, who had seen those churches and other sites with his own eyes. At the same time the *Itinerarium* could be used to help clear up any discrepancies between stories and geographical descriptions. A similar literary tactic had been employed by Adomnán in his *De locis sanctis*, in which the pilgrimage of the 'expert witness' Arculf was transformed into a work of biblical exegesis. Adomnán's main influence, and plausibly Willibald's, was Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, which encouraged the use of *narratio* and the comprehension of the symbolism of place in attempts to explain the meaning of Christianity.

The *Itinerarium* was incorporated into a *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* during Willibald's lifetime and probably under his supervision. The new, expanded work brought a conceptual unity of purpose to Willibald's work in Eichstätt and Heidenheim. It meant, for example, that the *Itinerarium* formed part of a work that more recognizably had potential as a liturgical work. This could have been intended for Willibald's own church, which itself went on to be influenced by ideas

of sacred space in the Holy Land in both its structure and its model of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It also meant that Willibald's story was extended to include that of his brother Wynnebald, whose relics were translated into that same church by Willibald. Even the title, referring to a *vita* in the singular, attests to how the stories of the two brothers were to be seen together. In Eichstätt, therefore, the literary, the saintly, and the architectural converged to convey a distinctive Christian message shaped by Willibald himself; it was, in fact, because he was essential to the form of the message that he appeared in a *vita* during his own lifetime. His programme for Eichstätt, close to areas that could still be remembered as pagan, can be seen as one response to debates about the nature of sacred space and sanctity evident elsewhere in Germany, Islam, and iconoclasm. Willibald was not simply curious about the Holy Land but, like Adomnán and Bede, came to appreciate the possibly fundamental importance that it could play when establishing a Christendom. It is in this context that the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, and in particular the status of Willibald as a saint, should be considered.

## CONCLUSION

Saints belonged to particular communities or locations through the power of stories that associated holy men or women to the local and distant worlds around them. When the priest of St Martin's in Utrecht wrote the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, he described Boniface's connections with Mainz, Fulda, Utrecht, and Dokkum in order to reinforce spiritual bonds along the Rhineland and beyond.<sup>1</sup> Through accounts of the nominally familiar and the strange, the monk also made Boniface into a symbol of the community of St Martin's, set apart from the seaborne life of the Frisian traders and the monsters of Germany, respectful of papal authority, and in need of a strong Christian past in a time of pagan Viking threats. The *Vita altera Bonifatii* was more than just history; it was a semi-allegorical meditation on the world of ninth-century Utrecht, and at its heart lay the saints who had established that world. Ideals of sanctity and piety may have transcended the physical world, but when a new saint was created what it stood for was closely dictated by the precise social, political, and cultural circumstances of the moment.

We began with questions about how and why a number of pious Anglo-Saxons working abroad were perceived as so important to the changing Frankish world in the eighth and ninth centuries. Some of these saints were not the great trailblazers they sometimes appeared to be in the sources, and some had only a local or limited influence and following. But even where they only built upon institutions and ideas already present, many became representative of both new Christian beginnings and positive changes. Figures like Boniface were successful as political actors as well as establishing themselves as among the truly pious figures of the age, particularly after Boniface became the first genuine martyr of the Carolingian *regnum*. The fact that Boniface, Willibrord, Willehad, and more were figures closely

<sup>1</sup> *VaB*, c. 17.

associated with the new regime under the Pippinids/Carolingians ensured that they grew in popularity and resonance. In order to provide some concluding remarks on the ways in which this happened, one can usefully identify a number of threads running through the study.

### *What the Anglo-Saxon Missions to the Continent Did*

It was already becoming evident in recent historiography on the ‘missions’ that many of the epithets attached to them were inappropriate and unhelpful. Whatever the Anglo-Saxons achieved abroad, associating them with the ‘foundations of Christian Europe’ was to give too much prominence to a limited section of the different peoples all engaged in similar works. It is telling that even with Charlemagne’s apparent interest in Boniface and Kilian — who although Irish can be included by association — communities across the Carolingian Empire only slowly added the two saints to their calendars, if ever. People in Italy or Brittany were unsurprisingly unmoved by the stories of modern saints in distant lands. Levison and Schieffer, of course, never claimed that the direct impact of Anglo-Saxons had been so universal, only that they had helped to establish certain movements and trends important to the development of Europe. The Anglo-Saxons and the Carolingians certainly perceived *Europa* as their field of play, as is evident in a range of letters, poems, and hagiographies.<sup>2</sup> In establishing micro-Christendoms they brought a global perspective to local horizons.<sup>3</sup>

The panoramic *Weltbild* of the ‘missions’ was important for defining their successes and the development of their reputations. The letters of Boniface alone reveal a man whose spiritual and literal peregrinations took him through a metaphorical world of Germanic tempests on a journey towards the heavenly Jerusalem. Willibald of Eichstätt went further in this imaginative world, using his own experiences abroad to bring the symbolism of the Holy Land to a small audience in Bavaria. In the descriptions of the transformation of northern wildernesses — and in the occasional presence of monsters — the Anglo-Saxon ‘missions’ were often

<sup>2</sup> Willibald, *VB*, c. 6; Alcuin, *Epistolae*, nos 7, 20. See also Cathwulf, *Epistolae variorum Carolo Magno regnante scriptae*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), no. 7, in which Charlemagne is hailed as ruling the ‘regnum Europae’, and the famous poem *Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH Poetae, 1 (Berlin, 1881), line 504, in which Charlemagne is given the poetic title ‘pater Europae’.

<sup>3</sup> On ‘micro-Christendoms’, see Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 355–79. On horizons, see Schieffer, ‘Der Gottesmann aus Übersee’.

about creating an imaginative landscape, pregnant with Christian metaphor, in which the importance of their work could be interpreted. Here the work of evangelization which sometimes seems so exaggerated could help to realign the cultures encountered in the North, both through actual preaching and through the reinforcement of hagiographical episode. Comparison with Jonas's *Vita Columbani* or the *Vita Amandi* demonstrate that the Anglo-Saxons were not alone in this kind of enterprise (even if the *Vita Amandi* plausibly borrows Bonifatian themes); but the 'missions' corresponded to a substantial and interrelated set of communities along and beyond the Rhineland who could usefully draw on this inheritance.

Anglo-Saxon influence did play a role in defining the language and direction of Church reform, an invigorated monasticism and interest in papal authority. In none of these fields may people like Willibrord or Willibald have been particularly original or decisive, and we must also accept that much impetus and thought came from people like Pippin III and Chrodegang. At the councils of 742–47 the strong role afforded to the *Regula s. Benedicti* and St Peter in many ways represented a heightening of even Boniface's interests in such things, stimulated by the Pippinids' own ideas and possibly also by the arrival of Willibald from Monte Cassino. Sturm and Benedict of Aniane, their hagiographers claimed, were instrumental thereafter in 'correcting' and purifying the Anglo-Saxons' attempts at renewed discipline. Reform often bred reform. This itself raises more questions about our sources: are representations of monasticism and papal authority in the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, for example, reflections of 742–47 or the post-Chrodegang world of Charlemagne and Tassilo who were looking to develop many of the same themes? Successive generations of writers found it only too easy to project their concerns and standards onto the 'golden age' of the Anglo-Saxon 'missions', often precisely because they drew on the same core values.

The 'missions' also contributed to redefinitions of sanctity. The Carolingians were keen to centralize and regulate the cult of saints — often in parallel with efforts to control monastic institutions — in order to lessen the threat of factionalism and to help impose high standards.<sup>4</sup> It is significant that at a time when there was great interest in venerating and importing long-dead Roman saints at the exclusion of 'new' saints, so many Anglo-Saxons and those closely associated with them stimulated rigorous saints' cults. For many groups, the work of building Christian communities genuinely began in this period. Many more saw a qualitative difference between an old fashioned martyr like Boniface, dying at the hands of pagans on the frontier, and even an exemplary and pious figure of the Merovingian years like

<sup>4</sup> Fouracre, 'Origins of the Carolingian Attempt to Regulate'.

Praejectus of Clermont, killed by Christians for the mistaken belief that he had had a role in political intrigue. If the coronation of Pippin in 751 marked a political rebirth for the Frankish *regnum*, the saints of the 'missions' presented a chance for many groups to characterize change through the saints. It is therefore necessary next to turn to the question of hagiography and constructions of sanctity.

### *The Influence of Audiences*

Hagiographers devised their constructions of sanctity often mindful of what their intended audiences would understand. Perhaps surprisingly, there are few discernible differences between saints' Lives written for monasteries and those written for a wider public. *Peregrinatio*, for example, is mentioned for both the partly lay audience of Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* and for the community in Echternach for whom the *Vita Willibrordi* was written. Saints are presented as having the power to transform regions through mission and pious example for many different kinds of audience. The *Regula s. Benedicti* was an integral part of Willibald's portrayal of Boniface for a wide audience and Eigil's portrayal of Sturm for Angildruth and the monks of Fulda. (Although perhaps interestingly it little affected the monastic writing of Liudger or the Utrecht priest.) Rome, meanwhile, loomed as large in the *Vita Burchardi* as it did in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, both reflecting the perceived *romanitas* the Frankish Church developed. Hagiography was undoubtedly used in different contexts for different purposes, but such structural considerations seem to fall away when one focuses on close readings of the texts.

The consistency between models of sanctity and *vitae* suggests two significant conclusions. First, it shows that in many respects the ways of defining a saint, while quite fluid, could be as appropriate for a lay audience as a monastic one. *Vitae* could be seen to offer *exempla pro imitatione* for both elements of society: pious behaviour was, after all, pious regardless of vocation, and lay people could be expected to support churches and monasteries and uphold their values.<sup>5</sup> There were few concessions made to lay culture in contrast with, say, Arbeo's muscular saints in Bavaria. The second conclusion is that it is possible to note here that differences in how texts were used — whether read out in churches or monasteries, or studied privately — had little apparent effect upon the ways of presenting someone as a saint. A text whose character seems to indicate more clearly its use as a sermon, like

<sup>5</sup> This makes less unique the blending of saintly and aristocratic values in Liudger's *VG*, on which see Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker'.



Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*, does not rely upon fundamentally different principles of saint-creation than a text intended for private study like Rudolf of Fulda's *Vita Leobae*. It is not the use of the text that affects its meaning, but the relationship between the literary artifices and the context that produced them.

Some of the ideals expressed by the associations between saints and places were, on the other hand, more obviously affected by intended audiences. Texts such as the *Vita Wigberti*, *Vita Sturmi*, or *Vita Leobae*, which were specifically designed for male and female monastic audiences, put greater emphasis on centres of monasticism through which standards of cloistered living could be symbolized. There is a contrast here with texts like the *Vita Bonifatii* or *Vita Gregorii* in which papal authority was given greater attention. Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, however, illustrates some of the problems with perceiving a distinction between monastic and public *vitae* that is too sharp. Addressed to a part-lay, part-clerical, and part-monastic audience, the text spends much time emphasizing the virtues and value of good monastic living. It is, to repeat, important to recognize that the secular world was not indifferent to how monks followed monastic rules when such things affected the spiritual well-being of the region. This is perhaps exemplified most clearly by the support of Carloman, Charlemagne, and Louis the Pious at different points of monastic reform. A distinction needs to be made between literary strategy and authorial intent since the same strategies could be used to different ends, but at the same time it is important to remember the overlap between the lay and religious worlds that produced *vitae*.

The harmony between lay and religious was an important precondition for a vigorous cult of saints under the Carolingians. The early cult of St Boniface in the Middle Rhine Valley was driven by the interest and wealth of local elites, men like Otakar and Laidrat. There were concerns in some quarters that the previous century had provided role models who were inappropriate precisely because they were too closely associated with aristocratic factions, even when the saints themselves — Praejectus, Audoin, etc. — comfortably met the stringent standards of other times. As outsiders absorbed into the Frankish world, Anglo-Saxons were simultaneously detached from some aspects of competitive secular politics while being able to play effective roles in the same field. Thus Willibrord could appear to the North Franconian nobility as both an independent ascetic and an associate of the Pippinids, or Willibald of Eichstätt could successfully move between Carolingian and Arnulfing circles. The cults which emerged following the 'missions' were not focal points for Carolingian authority or propaganda; rather, they were points of negotiation, adaptation, and resolution, as we saw in the case of the Thuringian revolt of 786.

### *Stimuli for Hagiographical Audiences*

The motivations behind hagiographers' definitions of sanctity are often specific to each author and should not be synthesized to provide an 'ideal type' which cannot, in practice, be applied anywhere with any explanatory force. Conventions explain nothing if they are not studied as part of the dynamic and often non-conventional processes of discourse and historical action. Instead, the search for explanations should focus upon how and why people responded differently to the same events, or how and why they used literary strategies to respond to different events.

Saints' Lives were often prompted by concerns for status. It seems wrong, for example, to divorce entirely the production of the *Vita Bonifatii* from Lull's work in developing his diocese and furthering reform. It was Alcuin's loss of status when he moved from the court to Tours that seems to have motivated his account of Willibrord's position and relations with the court, perhaps in order to support some sense of moral authority he still felt over Charlemagne. Most blatantly Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, with its lengthy justification for Hamburg's archiepiscopal status, illustrates neatly how saints' cults and literature could become the vehicles for someone's ambitions. Discussions of status could be used from a position of weakness to make claims about desired or lost positions of power written about in relation to the past, present, and intended future of the author or audience. Saints' cults were also used from a position of strength, for example to support Charlemagne's subjugation of Saxony, although it is perhaps notable that less hagiographical literature was produced in such contexts. The author of the *Vita Willehadi* wanted to associate himself with Charlemagne's power but showed no signs of close connections with the court itself, and likewise the *Vita Sturmi* and *Vita Wigberti* saw Eigil and Lupus, living outside the court, weave the case of Saxony into narratives about other things. Hagiography provided a powerful forum in which the response of the outsider, the marginalized, the threatened, or those removed from the centre stage of political life could be heard.

The problems of the 840s seem to have provoked a noticeable rise in the production of *vitae* inspired by the Anglo-Saxons. It was about this time that the *Vita Liudgeri*, *Vita Willehadi*, *Passio minor Kiliani*, and *Sermo Sualonis* were composed, creating an unprecedented amount of active interest in the Anglo-Saxons or characters associated with them. When studied in their specific contexts each seems to offer some response to wider Carolingian division and reconceptualizations of empire. Alfrid and the Bremen cleric both made claims through the past of their saints that contradicted the territorial divisions as set down in the 843 Treaty of Verdun. The stories about Kilian and Sualo, meanwhile, all contain peculiar stories

that reaffirm how their pasts had been established with papal authority, either in conjunction with or independently of Carolingian support. The Anglo-Saxons and their ideals seem to have provided a useful model for expressing legitimacy east of the Rhine in the Carolingian period.

Defending Christian morale naturally also played a part in stimulating the production of saints' Lives and associated writings. Viking attacks in particular seem to have prompted Anskar to write the *Miracula Willehadi* to inspire his congregation at Bremen. The Saxons fulfilled similar roles in Eigil's *Vita Sturmi* and Lupus's *Vita Wigberti*, where threats to Fulda, Fritzlar, and Hersfeld were overcome through saintly intercession and Charlemagne's military might. While pagan attacks were a direct stimulus for Anskar, however, Eigil and Lupus were well removed from any actual danger to inspire their writings, although the end products contained no less allegorical detachment from the worlds they described. Irrespective of the proximity to danger, stories of saints overcoming pagan or military threats consoled and strengthened communities; in these contexts it is only to be expected that the focus would be inward, upon the locality, rather than upon distant events.

The Anglo-Saxon missions appear to have been reinterpreted in response to Benedictine reforms, and particularly those of St Benedict of Aniane during the reign of Louis the Pious. Although in many respects these reforms represented continuities with those of Boniface and Chrodegang, Ardo of Aniane was keen to disassociate the later movement from earlier ones. There had been changes in emphasis since Boniface's synods, particularly in Boniface's own foundation of Fulda where Ratgar's abbacy had opened up questions about outside interference in monastic affairs and the power of abbots. Indeed, much of the Fulda hagiographical tradition seems to have built up in response to monastic reform. The effect this had on the image of the Anglo-Saxons is striking: Boniface was criticized for having established unpopular rules and making improper requests for Leoba's burial, while elements of Leoba's cloistered life were told in accordance with ninth-century standards. For Fulda, as elsewhere, the past was little more than a reflection of the present.

### *Responses to the Anglo-Saxon Traditions*

Cults of the Anglo-Saxons who went to the continent would not have achieved prominence without being accepted by the other people who lived in Germany and Frisia. Some cults achieved wider recognition than others, notably that of St Boniface. The earliest *vitae* — those of Boniface, Willibald, and Wynnebald — arose out of the 'missions' themselves but seem to have been responses to how the heirs

of the Bonifatian enterprises had come to fit into the new socio-political landscape east of the Rhine. Some of their 'social logic' can be found in the way Ardeo and Virgil were receptive to the image of sanctity even if they ignored some of the underlying messages in Willibald and Hygeburg's work. It is perhaps significant that the Anglo-Saxon cults developed in this way because it means that they did not grow in a purely local environment; rather, the initial *vitae* fed into wider debates about what it meant to be a saint. The next two generations of heirs in places like Würzburg and Fulda continued to expand and refine such ideals of sanctity. Again not every development was positive, and Alcuin, for example, took some exception to the image of Boniface as a willing martyr even though he venerated the saint. In the North, heirs to Boniface's work like Liudger and, in some senses, Anskar took reverence for Boniface into East Frisia and Saxony; the expansion of the Carolingian frontier, therefore, was another factor in expanding the popularity of the Anglo-Saxon cults. The Frankish court itself may have helped to promote some of these cults in Germany and, at the same time, some centres actively claimed associations between the Carolingians and saints like Willehad and Liudger. Few cults reached any prominence outside Germany and Frisia with, for example, only Boniface of the missionaries appearing in martyrologies and calendars from both Britain and Burgundy.

### *Hagiography, History, and Interpretation*

Hagiographical stories are not fictions, or at least rarely straightforward ones. Many stories built upon or stretched associations between saints and localities that were recognized outside the confines of the text. There are a variety of strategies that can be employed to consider the 'truth values' of these associations. It is possible to use letters and charters to attest to the presence of the saints in certain locations. One may, however, wish to avoid saying letters and charters 'verify' these stories because both the composition and dissemination of these non-historical sources leave open the potential for literary playfulness, exaggeration, distortion, and outright forgery. This can make it difficult to ascertain the precise nature of the relationship. The case of Willibrord in Utrecht is particularly instructive. Five hagiographers in this study mention Willibrord's work in Frisia, as do Bede, the *Liber pontificalis*, Boniface's letter to Pope Stephen II, and a number of charters. Not a single one of these sources is, on its own, unproblematic: the hagiographers and historians contradict each other and exaggerate, the letter betrays Boniface's

capacity 'to falsify history' (as Marco Mostert put it),<sup>6</sup> and the charters appear corrupt in the sole collection of them which dates from the twelfth century. Perhaps all that can be reconstructed is the unhelpful-looking proposition, 'Willibrord probably spent some time in Utrecht'. That this was a widely repeated proposition in saints' Lives, however, suggests that it had meaning to the people who wrote these sources, even if it appears more likely that Echternach was more important to Willibrord. The lesson is that the hagiographers — Willibald, Alcuin, Liudger, Alfrid, and the St Martin's priest — all wrote about Willibrord in a way that was widely recognized as meaningful outside the confines of their texts, even if that meaning was a distortion of 'historical actuality' or was imbued with extra meaning through the medium of the text.

It is rare that a hagiographer approached his or her art with complete freedom to invent and shape the past. Authors were limited, as we have just seen, by understandings of the subject matter outside the text itself. This point can be expanded to incorporate more generally the limitations brought upon the author by external factors. Willibald's account of Boniface was, for example, a product of the recent past Boniface inhabited, Willibald's relationship with Lull and Megingoz, the content of the letters and reminiscences that informed Willibald of his subject, and the literary forms and styles — hagiographical, Aldhelmian, classical — that he employed to structure his account. It is, of course, impossible that it could have been otherwise, bearing in mind that the past can normally only be understood through the theories and structures imposed upon it, like all subjects of *a posteriori* investigation. Therefore even once it has been established that something like Willibrord's association with Utrecht is meaningful, the nuances of each individual instance of such an assertion are dependent on the prejudices of the writer (and of course the modern historian who reads those assertions) and not the career of Willibrord himself. While Willibrord might have been an important saint in Utrecht because he had worked in the city, at the same time he was only meaningfully so subject to the ways in which that proposition was understood, repeated, or transformed by people like Willibald and Liudger; the same holds true for all saints in all places.

It is important to locate the hagiographers' accounts of saints in relation to the kinds of theories appropriate to the tasks they undertook when writing. Saints are the products of interpretive acts. They could not be called *sanctus* or *martyr* without an individual or group defining them thus. Saints are, therefore, in many ways identical to the form and function of the saints' cults, which were often set out in saints' Lives. It is the literary representations of pious individuals, in other

<sup>6</sup> Mostert, 'Bonifatius als geschiedvervalser'.

words, which are integral to their status and usefulness as a saint. These representations are guided by a variety of overarching authorial intentions, making the explanations of sanctity subject to a range of allegorical or symbolic, inspirational, emotional, and devotional ideas. It is in the subjective take on the past and within the gaps of what is known that the creative element of writing hagiography truly comes into play and the past gains a significance it did not have in itself. This is why something like the Anglo-Saxon missions cannot be understood as a series of confined events: their significance was constantly revised, edited, and reshaped according to the needs, interests, and tastes of anyone whose attention was drawn by the saints of the Carolingian world.

In the 860s, a hagiographer in Werden reflected back on the history of the conversion of Frisia and Westphalia. Starting with a brief comment on Charlemagne in Saxony, taken from Altfred, the author wrote:

Venerunt et pius de terra Anglorum plures homines Dei spontanea pro Dei amore peregrinatione delectati, qui exeuntes de terra et cognatione sua nostras patrias agnitione Christi illuminare laboraverunt. Ex quibus eximius doctor Willibrordus et socii eius, nec non et Wynfrid cognomento Bonifatius.<sup>7</sup>

There was to the writer a sense of a large-scale movement that went beyond individual action: ‘many men’ coming to transform multiple ‘homelands’. In the century since Willibald of Mainz first set down the continental traditions about the missions, Werden had gone from being just beyond the frontier of the Carolingian world to being comfortably within it with landholdings entwined with royal monasteries like Prüm. Embracing the legacy and legends of the Anglo-Saxon missions was a central part of its changing identity and role. Saints and hagiography now provided the historical foundations of communities in the North with a new Christian future to pursue. In that context the Anglo-Saxon missions provided a rich and varied collection of stories and characters which could be easily adapted and reshaped on both local and universal levels. For two generations, Anglo-Saxons contributed to current continental debates about the nature and scope of the new Western European order; in successive generations, these debates established historical and imaginative grounds to continue such redefinition.

<sup>7</sup> *Vita Liudgeri secunda*, I. 1: ‘Many pious men of God came of their own will from the land of the Angles, delighting in *peregrinatio* for the love of God. Having left their land and those they knew, they laboured to illuminate our lands in the knowledge of Christ. From among them came the excellent teacher Willibrord and his companions, and no less Wynfrith who was also called Boniface.’

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